

SORCERERS, WITCHES, AND WEASELS:
GRIGOR TAT'EWAC'I'S DEFINITIONS OF THE MAGICAL ARTS

by

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Introduction

Throughout its existence, the Armenian Orthodox Church has condemned magical practices. Refutations of the magical arts have circulated in Armenian from the beginning of its literature in the fifth century. Two treatises have been attributed to the inventor of the Armenian alphabet, Mesrop Maštoc' (5thc.): *The Canon of Grigor Part'ew* [the Illuminator] (*Կանոն Սրբոյն Գրիգորի Պարթևի*)¹ and the very brief *Discourse Against Augurs* (*Խոսք ընդդէմ Հմայից*)². The former text, which Adontz has argued to be a source for Eznik's *Against the Heresies* (*Եղծ աղանդոց*), responds to questions about the efficacy of sorcerers, the abilities of demons, and the reality of mythical creatures. The *Discourse Against Augurs* warns that despite Christ's victory on the Cross, Satan can still conduct men to their destruction through augurs (*Հմայիւք*), talismans (*յուռութք*), potions (*դեղաՀատք*), etc. It further instructs that dreams (*երազք*), augurs (*Հմայք*), talismans (*յուռութք*), nonsense (*բաջաղանք*), divinations, (*դիւթութիւնք*), spells (*թովչութիւնք*), oracles (*Հարցուկք*), sleights of hand (*ձեռնածուք*), potions (*դեղաՀատք*), omens (*խաիրք*), and the like have been anathematized by the Church.

Although the exact dating of these two texts remains uncertain, the eighth, ninth, and tenth canons of the Council of Šahapiwan (444) attest to the anxiety felt by Armenian ecclesiastics concerning the practice of magic in the fifth century³. The eighth canon condemns those who engage in sorcery (*կախարդութիւն*), which it equates with apostasy. The ninth prescribes fines for those who go to oracles (*Հարցուկ*) or engage in

¹ ADONTZ 1925-1926; XAČ'IKYAN 1964.

² AKINEAN 1958.

³ AKINEAN 1953, p.379-380.

divination (*դիվթել*). If the person is a noble (*ազատ*)⁴ he is to be fined 200 drams; if he is a peasant (*չինական*), he is to be whipped 15 times twice and fined 100 drams; if he is destitute, he must spend three years in repentance. If the offender is a bishop or a priest, and there are two or three witnesses, he is to be defrocked. If he is a bishop, he is to be fined 1000 drams; if a priest, 500 drams. The sum is to be distributed among the needy of the church. If someone from the religious orders or who is a solitary frequents oracles, he is to be thrown out of the orders and bear the same punishments, fines, and penitence as a lay person; likewise also the son of a priest. The tenth canon, addressed to “they who merely divine but do not practice sorcery” (*որք լիկ դիվթեն և ոչ կախարդեն*)⁵, suggests that divining (*դիվթել*) was considered less egregious than practicing sorcery (*կախարդել*). A man or woman found in such an activity is to be whipped 15 times twice, burned, slandered, and must work in a leper colony. If the culprit is a noble who does not wish to labor in a leper colony, he must give 500 drams to a leper colony and remain two years in penitence.

From the list of punishments to be meted out, it is clear that church officials suspected all levels of society to be engaged in magical practices. The canons outline prescriptions for the castigation of nobles and peasants, clergy and lay, men and women. The fines and physical punishments demonstrate that men and women were to be treated equally. One’s social status was also taken into account—wealthier persons paid heavier fines, members of the clergy suffering the highest financial punishments—and the monies accrued from fines helped finance ecclesiastical institutions. In general, the canons do not explain the nature of the activities, although the title of the tenth canon implies that practicing sorcery (*կախարդել*) was more contemptible than divining (*դիվթել*).

Such condemnations of magic continue into the Middle Ages⁶. Yovhannēs Mayragomec’i’s “Letter concerning conjurers’ spells and impious makers of talismans” (*Թուղթ վասն Հրամայից դիվականաց և անորէն յուղթողաց*), composed in the seventh-century⁷, presents the most encompassing list of Armenian magical practices; but it does not

⁴ These incorporated the lowest stratum of the Iranian and Armenian nobility, cf. P’AWSTOS 1989, p.512.

⁵ The difference between divining in this instance and above is not elucidated.

⁶ I provide text and translation of relevant passages from the following works below.

⁷ The letter is attributed to Yovhannēs Mandakuni (c. 420-490) but is more likely the work of Yovhannēs Mayragomec’i (575-640), TĒR-MKRTČ’EAN 1913, GARITTE 1952, p.348.

concentrate on what was being done as much as how wrong it was to do it. It also does not place the many forms of magic it discusses in any particular order or system.

In the first half of the twelfth century, Dawit' Ganjakec'i composed his *Canonical Advice* (*Խրատ կանոնական*), a book of counsels for priests⁸. The ninety-fifth chapter of that work concerns various kinds of divination (*Հմայութիւն*) and evil customs. Although Dawit's list of magical practices is much briefer than that compiled by Yovhannēs Mayragomec'i, he does provide a description of the activities that offend him.

Unfortunately, the *Lawcode* (*Դատաստանագիրք*) compiled by Mxit'ar Goš at the end of the twelfth century does not furnish much information about magical practices. Although Mxit'ar cites the Council of Šahapiwan, he does not incorporate the canons concerning sorcery. He does address the legal status of animals and people who have been possessed by demons and also notes that the practice of sorcery (*կախարդութիւն*) by one's wife is legitimate grounds for divorce⁹.

At the end of the twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth century, Vardan Aygekc'i also included a polemic against sorcery and demonology in his *Counsels* (*Խրատք*)¹⁰. Although brief, the text does mention specific acts of witchcraft and condemns people who visit places of sorcery.

At the close of the fourteenth-century, Grigor Tat'ewac'i (1344-1409) completed his monumental *Book of Questions* (*Գիրք Հարցմանց*), the first handbook of systematic theology for the Armenian Church. In his commentary to the book of Numbers, the author devotes two questions to the definition of certain magical practices (vol. VI, sect. 64)¹¹. Tat'ewac'i attempts to distinguish between "the 'diviner,' and the 'augur,' the 'sorcerer,' etc." (*գիւթն, և Հմայն, կախարդն, և այլն*). He uses Dt. 18:10-11 as the framework for his explanation: "There shall

⁸ DAWIT' GANJAKEC'I 1961.

⁹ See especially, MXIT'AR GOŠ 2000, p.145, 195. This suggests, not unexpectedly, that sorcery (*կախարդութիւն*) was associated with women in the twelfth century as Mxit'ar does not indicate that a woman could divorce a man if he practiced sorcery. Contrary to this, Goš admits that either women or men may be possessed by a demon [e.g., MXIT'AR GOŠ 2000, chs. 7 and 8] and counsels that a woman may leave a man if he possesses a penchant for sodomy, bestiality, or sexually consorting with Muslims [MXIT'AR GOŠ 2000, ch. 12]. Again, in the story about Gēorg Skewřac'i (c. 1246-1301) cited below, the saint comes into contact with a woman who performs magical practices.

¹⁰ VARDAN AYGEKC'I 1956. The text has been translated below.

¹¹ GRIGOR TAT'EWAC'I 1993, p.388-389. The section itself discusses the figure of Bal-aam, Arm. *Բաղաամ* (Num 22-25), whom Tat'ewac'i's describes as a sorcerer (*կախարդ*) and a magus (*մոդ*) because he was accustomed to speaking with demons.

not be found among you one who passes his son or his daughter through fire, or performs divinations, or casts spells, or is an augur, [11] or performs sorcery, or [is a] witch, or [is] a necromancer for questioning the dead.”¹² Tat’ewac’i defines all of the practices mentioned in the citation and one more, ‘dream interpreter’ (*երազաշան*)¹³. His definitions present a rather systematic, if not comprehensive, understanding of the practices under discussion.

Tat’ewac’i lists six categories of magicians which can be subdivided into two classes of three. The first three are concerned with the manipulation of physical objects in this world, while the second are concerned with communication with the world beyond. The first class includes the diviner (*ղիւթն*), the augur (*Հմայն*), and the sorcerer (*կախարդն*). Tat’ewac’i differentiates the practices of these magicians through specific examples from which the student may generalize. The author makes clear that his examples are not exhaustive as he usually ends each list in an open manner. For example, at the end of his list of types of divination he writes ‘and everything else’ (*և այլն ամենայն*); at the end of auguries, ‘or other things like these’ (*կամ այլ ինչ այսպիսի*); at the end of sorcery, ‘and with various charms’ (*և պէս պէս [բ]ժժանաւք*). According to Grigor, divination involves the use of the participant’s hand and some other natural substance (such as flour or water); augury entails the observation of external phenomena; and sorcery requires the manipulation of fashioned or natural objects to make either talismans or illusions.

Tat’ewac’i encounters some difficulties with the second class—*վհուկ* (‘witch’), *նշանագէտ* (‘necromancer’), *երազաշան* (‘dream interpreter’). *վհուկ* translates Gr. *engastrimythos*, ‘diviner of entrails’, and is likely to be derived from a Mlr. form of OIr, **vithuka* — from *vaēth* —, ‘to ascertain for legal purposes (through divination)’¹⁴. Grigor defines a *վհուկ* as someone who conjures demons from ‘abysses’ in the form of men who have died. His interpretation of the word is based on a false etymology of *վհուկ* from *վիհ*, ‘abyss’.

Նշանագէտ (lit. ‘a knower of signs,’ a calque on Gr. *teratoskopos*) is a rare word in Armenian. According to the NBHL, other than its appear-

¹² Մի գտանիցի ի քեզ որ անիցէ զուստր իւր կամ զզուստր իւր զբոցով. և զիւթիցէ զիւթութիւն, և Հմայիցէ, և ՀաւաՀարց լինիցի [11] և կախարդիցէ կախարդանօք, և վհուկ, և նշանագէտ լինիցի առ ի զմեռեալսն Հարցնելոյ.

¹³ We may note that *երազաշան* does occur in Dt. 13:1,3, and 5.

¹⁴ RUSSELL 1987a, p.442, citing E. Benveniste “Études iraniennes,” *Transactions of the Philological Society* (London), 1945, p.75.

ance in Dt. 18:11 where it is described as someone who questions the dead, it occurs only in Vardan Arewelc'i's unpublished commentary to Deuteronomy. Ališan may be referring to this work when he reports that "someone says" (*կըսէ մէկն*) that "*նշանագէտ* [is] one who by means of the dead makes [something] significant" (*նշանագէտ որ մեռելովք նշանաւոր անէ*)¹⁵. Although Vardan's commentary may have been a source for Tat'ewac'i's passage, both definitions are based upon Dt. 18:11. In order to clearly distinguish *նշանագէտ* from *վհուկ*, Tat'ewac'i ascribes the act of sleeping in a tomb to the *նշանագէտ*. Pressed for an example of such a practice, he provides the witch of Endor's conjuring up Samuel for Saul (1Kgs[=1Sam.]28). Grigor, however, later uses the witch of Endor to demonstrate that *վհուկք* are charlatans (vol. VII, sect. 12)¹⁶. There is no act of sleeping mentioned in the Biblical passage and the author's example suffers from the same deficiency as Vardan's explanation.

Tat'ewac'i's final category is *երազաշան*, 'dream interpreter.'¹⁷ Oracles that operated by means of dreams were known in Armenia from pre-Christian times. In his account of the destruction of the pagan temples of Armenia, Agat'angelos relates that the first temple that King Trdat III came upon was "of the dream-displaying, dream-interpreting worship of the god Tir" (*երազացոյց երազաշան պաշտաման Տրի դից*)¹⁸. Xorenac'i also uses *երազաշան* to describe a *magus*¹⁹. As in the case of *վհուկ*, the precise distinction between *նշանագէտ* and *երազաշան* is hazy; both are types of dream interpretation. According to Tat'ewac'i, the *երազաշան* is afflicted by demons at night and proclaims false prophecies. These nocturnal demonic attacks resemble those described by Evagrius and Vardan Aygekec'i in their counsels to monastics.

Subsequent to his classification of magical practices, Tat'ewac'i addresses the problem of why God permits such things. The first part of his response mirrors Mayragomec'i's explanation of the same question. Both authors are adamant that all forms of witchcraft are mere illusions that do not have any intrinsic power in and of themselves. Demons play a role in magic, but only through the God's permission. God allows the demons to operate and people to persist in these acts in order to punish

¹⁵ ALIŠAN 1910, p.399.

¹⁶ GRIGOR TAT'EWAC'I 1993, p.428. Tat'ewac'i is following the Arm. Bible which uses the word *վհուկ*.

¹⁷ On this and related terms in Armenian and Iranian literature, see RUSSELL 1992.

¹⁸ AGAT'ANGELOS 1980, par. 778, also cited by RUSSELL 1987a, p.295.

¹⁹ MOVSEŠ XORENAC'I, 1991, II, 48; cited also by RUSSELL, 1987a, p.296.

practitioners of magic and to distinguish the truly faithful. The second part of Tat'ewac'i's response is based upon John Chrysostom's twenty-ninth homily on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians.

Tat'ewac'i's list begs the question of how many of these practices were merely standard literary *topoi* and how many, if any, were actually performed in Armenia in the fourteenth-century? Tat'ewac'i unfortunately does not cite his sources; it is difficult to ascertain whether he is describing a practice known to him only from a text or something which he had witnessed, or both. Among Tat'ewac'i's Armenian sources are Yovhannēs Mayragomec'i's letter, Dawit' Ganjakec'i's chapter, the *Questions and Answers on the Book of Genesis* (Հարցմունք և Պատասխանիք ի Գիրք Մննդոց) attributed to Elišē²⁰, and possibly Vardan Arewelc'i's commentary on Deuteronomy. There are also similarities with other Armenian authors such as Vardan Aygekc'i and Yovhannēs Vanakan Vardapet Tawușec'i. Grigor also relied on non-native sources translated into Armenian such as Ps.-Nonnos's mythological *scholia* attached to Gregory Nazianzenus' *Orations*, and John Chrysostom's commentary on Paul's Epistles. Tat'ewac'i's response also attests to the influence of Arabic magical terms in Armenian. In his definition of լՀուկ, Grigor remarks that the populace calls the conjuring of demons Հաղիմսս, a transcription of the Arabic word *'azīma*.

The ethnographic work conducted by E. Lalayean in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has proved very helpful in determining the likelihood that the practices Tat'ewac'i mentions were performed in his time. Although not an absolute guarantee, the similarities between some of the activities noted by Tat'ewac'i and his earlier sources and those of Armenians five hundred years later suggest a continued tradition of performance.

Tat'ewac'i's passage on witchcraft presents a glimpse into a fourteenth-century monastic's understanding of various magical terms and activities. It is also a good example of the author's ability to combine descriptions and observations of folk practices and beliefs with his scholarly knowledge of Armenian literature and the Church Fathers²¹.

²⁰ This work was more likely composed by Vahram Rabuni in the thirteenth century, VARDANEAN 1929; see also XAČ'IKYAN 1992, p.22-24.

²¹ Tat'ewac'i also does this in his brief commentary on Job in the *Book of Questions*, see LA PORTA 1997. On Tat'ewac'i's use of folk material his sermons, see MANUKYAN 1997.

Text and Translation

Վասն դիւթից Հարց:

Եւ աստ Հարցանեմ, զի՞նչ է դիւթն, և
Հմայն, կախարդն, և այլն:

Պատասխանի: Դիւթ է՝ որ ձեռաւք և
նիւթով գործէ. որպէս գարի, և ալիւր,
և աւազ, և ջուր, և քար. և այն որ թզով
չափէ, և այլն ամենայն:

Հմայն է՝ որ գտեսս աչաց կամ զձայն
Հմայէ. և զթոխս և զկոխս Հաւուց. և
զձայն կրակի և զանոաց. և զգրան,
կամ աքիս տեսեալ. կամ բէճ. կամ
մուճակ. կամ այլ ինչ այսպիսի:

Իսկ կախարդն՝ որ անաւթ ինչ թաղէ ի
Հող. կապս, կամ մոմ, կամ երկաթ, և
պէս պէս [բ]ժժանաւք յարմարեն
զարուեստն:

ՎՀուկն այն է, որ ի վՀաց և յանդոց
մեռեալս կերպարանեն. զեք ի կերպս
մարդկան երևին. զոր զեակոչ ասեն և
Հագիմաթ:

Եւ նշանագէտ, որ ի գերեզմանս ննջէ և
նշանաւոր մարդ կերպարանէ. որպէս
զՍամուէլ Սաւուղայ երևեցոյց Հար-
ցուկ կինն:

Եւ երազահանն, որ ի գիշերի տեսանէ
զգեւ և մարգարէութիւն պատմէ զի
պատրեցէ:

Հարց: Վասն էր՞ թոյլ տայ աստուած
ինիլ այսոցիկ նշանաց:

Պատ: Վասն երկու պատճառի: Նախ՝
զի փորձեսցին և ընտրեսցին ի մի-
մեանց Հաստատունքն ի Հաւատս և
տկարքն:

Երկրորդ զի գործունեայք և Հաւա-
նաւըքն այնպիսեացն պատժեսցին.

Question concerning Diviners

[I] And here I ask, what is the
'diviner,' and the 'augur,' the 'sor-
cerer,' etc.?

[II] Answer: A diviner is he who
works with [his] hands and a sub-
stance such as barley, flour, sand,
water, and stone, and that which he
measures with [his] palm, and every-
thing else.

[III] The augur is he who augurs
visual sights and sounds. He observes
the flights and cacklings of chickens
and the sound of fire, and beams, and
a door, or a weasel, or a comb, and or
slippers, or other things like these.

[IV] And the sorcerer [is] he who
buries some vessel in the earth, [or]
ropes, wax, or iron; and with various
talismans they apply their art.

[V] The witch is that one who give[s]
form to the dead from abysses and
chasms; demons appear in the form of
men, which they call 'demon-calling'
or 'hazimat'.

[VI] And the necromancer [is] he who
sleeps in a tomb and an important man
takes form; as the mantic woman
caused Samuel to appear to Saul²².

[VII] And the dream interpreter [is] he
who in the night sees demons and tells
prophecy in order to deceive.

[VIII] Q.: Why does God allow such
signs to exist?

[IX] A.: For two reasons. First, so that
the steadfast in faith and the weak
may be tested and distinguished from
each other.

[X] Second, so that those who deal in
and believe such things may be pun-

²² 1Kgs (1Sam.) 28.

որպէս ի յերկրորդ արէնքն Հրամայէ սպանանել այնպիսին. իսկ Հաստատունքն ի Հաւատս՝ վարձս առցեն ի Հաւատոց իւրեանց:

Եւ յայտնի նշան մոլորութեան նոցա այս է, զի այնպիսեաց կատարաւոր վատթարք են գործովք և մոլի. և առ դեռ տանին զմարդիկք բռնութեամբ. բոտ այնմ որ ասէ Պաւղոս, մինչ Հեթանոսքն էիք՝ առ կուռս անմոռնչս որպէս երթայիք և գայիք: Ոչ ասէ գնալ որ կամաւորն է. այլ երթալ, որ ակամայ քարշիւն է:

Եւ վասն կախարդաց գրեալ է ի վերոյ իի գլուխն իէ Համարն:

ished, as in Deuteronomy He commands to kill such people²³. But the steadfast in faith will receive recompenses for their faith.

[XI] And a clear sign of their error is this: The performers of such things are ignoble in deed and mad and they give men to the demons by force. Accordingly, Paul said: “When you were heathens, how you were led away and used to come to the speechless idols.”²⁴ He did not say “to go,” which is willful, but “to be led away” which is to be drawn involuntarily.

[XII] And concerning sorcerers it is written above in chapter 20, section 27.

Commentary

[I]:

a. “diviner” (*դիւթ*).

Դիւթ is a word of uncertain etymology²⁵. The noun *դիւթ* occurs only once in the Bible (2 Chron. 35:19), but the verb *դիւթել* and the abstract noun *դիւթութիւն* are quite common²⁶.

b. “augur” (*Հմայ*).

Հմայ(p) is an Iranian loan word, cf. NP *humāy*²⁷. It, as well as the verbal form *Հմայել*, occurs quite frequently in the Bible where it renders Biblical Gr. *oionismos*.

c. “sorcerer” (*կախարդ*).

Կախարդ translates Biblical Gr. *goēs* and *pharmakeus* and is derived from Av. *kax^warədha* - (*Yasna* 61.2, a type of witch) via Mlr. **kax^warda* -²⁸. It and its verbal and abstract forms are also quite common in the Bible.

²³ Cf. Dt. 13:9 and 18:20.

²⁴ 1 Cor. 12:2.

²⁵ RUSSELL 1987a, p.442-443; and ALIŠAN 1910, p.403-404.

²⁶ THOMSON 1992a, p.309.

²⁷ RUSSELL 1987a, p.443; and AČARYAN 1971-79, s.v..

²⁸ SCHWARTZ 1970, p.389-391; RUSSELL 1987a, p.442.

Tat'ewac'i had previously concerned himself with sorcerers in the *Book of Questions* in his commentary on Exodus, "A Question Concerning Sorcerers" (Վասն Կախարդաց Հարցումն), v. 6, sect. 27²⁹:

Գէտքն որ'պէս առնեն Հրաշք:

Պատասխանի: Հրաշքն կրկին է: Է որ զեութիւն փոխէ. որպէս Մովսէս զգետն յարիւն զարծոյց և զգաւազանն յաւձ: Եւ այս կոչի սքանչելիք:

Եւ է որ զկերպն և զձէն միայն փոխէ, և կոչի առ աշաւք. որպէս Յանէսն և Յամբրէսն առնէին կախարդութեամբ դիւական: Զի որպէս ստուեր ոչ է մարդ, ալլ նմանութիւն մարդոյ: Եւ որպէս սատանայ Հրեշտակ լուսոյ կերպարանի որ չէ իսկ: Նոյնպէս պաշտանեալք նորա ցուցանեն ինչ որ չէ ճշմարիտ:

Եւ յայտ է ի չորից:

Նախ զի կախարդքն զայն առնէին զոր Մովսէսն առնէր: Եւ թէ ճշմարիտ էր ընդէր³⁰ նոր ինչ ոչ առնէին: Ալլ զի տեսանաւորն զարհուրեալք ի ճշմարիտ նշանիցն Մովսէսի առ աշաւք թուէր թէ և կախարդքն այնպէս առնէին:

Երկրորդ զի գաւազանն Մովսէսի մի վիշապ եղեալ կլանէր զբազում վիշապս նոցա որ և Հետն միանգամայն ոչ երեւէր: Ընդէր³¹ ապա և նոցայն ոչ եկուլ զՄովսէսին: Քանզի սուտ էր:

Երրորդ կեղն և խաղաւարարտն եղև և ի կախարդսն և զայլ Հարուածսն

How do magicians work wonders?

Answer: There are two kinds of wonders. There is that which changes essence, as Moses turned the river to blood and his staff to a serpent. And this is called a miracle.

And there is that which only changes the form and shape, and it is called an apparition, as Jannes and Jambres used to do through demonic sorcery³⁰. Since, as a spectre is not a man, but the likeness of a man; and as Satan takes the form of an angel of light—which he truly is not!—in the same manner his servants demonstrate something that is not true³¹.

And [this] is evident from four things. First, since the sorcerers did that which Moses did; but if it was true why did they not do something new? But since the onlookers were astonished by the signs of Moses, it seemed fantastical that the sorcerers did that same [thing].

Second, since the staff of Moses having become one serpent devoured their many serpents without leaving a trace³². And why did not one of theirs eat that of Moses? Because it was false!

Third, the [plague of] ulcer[s] and abscess[es] appeared also upon the

²⁹ GRIGOR TAT'EWAC'I 1993, p.335-336.

³⁰ 2Tim 3:8. *առ աշաւք*, 'with respect to the eyes', implies a level of non-reality akin to something fantastical which 'appearance' does not fully convey.

³¹ 2 Cor 11:14. Tat'ewac'i mentions this as well in his commentary on Job in the *Book of Questions*, see LA PORTA 1997, p.145. This passage with its four subsequent proofs is taken directly from ELIŠE 1924, p.21.

³² Ex 7:10-12.

կրեցին. և ոչ կարէին ի Մովսէս և յԱւարոն դարձուցանել զնոյնս:

Չորրորդ յայտ է, զի ինքեանք խոստովանեցան թէ մատն աստուծոյ է այս. և ոչ կարացին այնպէս առնել:

Եւ այս գիտելի է զի կախարդքն փոխեն զզգայարանս և ցուցանեն առ աչաւք երևումն ինչ: Իսկ զեքն փոխեն զերևակայութիւն և զզգայարանս, այլ ոչ զմիտս:

Իսկ Հրեշտակք կարեն փոխել զմիտս և շրջել ի բարին. նաև զերևակայութիւնս և զզգայարանս, այլ ոչ զկամս:

Իսկ աստուած փոխէ և զկամս ազգելով ի նոսա զբարին. և դարձուցանէ ի չարէ: Եւ երբեմն թոյլ տալով անձնիշխան կամացն դառնալ ի չարիս: Այն է որ ասէ մատնեաց զնոսա ի միտս անարգութեան գործել զանարժանս:

sorcerers and they suffered the other scourges, and they were not able to turn those things back onto Moses and Aaron³³.

Fourth, it is evident because they themselves confess that this was the finger of God and they were not able to do the same³⁴.

And this is to be known since sorcerers change sensible objects and display an apparition before the eyes. And demons change imaginations and sensible objects, but not minds³⁵.

But angels are able to change minds and to turn [them] to the good as well as imaginations and sensible objects, but not wills.

But God changes wills to the good by influencing them and causes [them] to turn from evil. And sometimes He allows [them] to return to evil things through giving [them] free wills. That is why it says: “He gave them up to a mind of vileness to do unworthy deeds.”³⁶

This early portions of this passage are reliant upon the following discussion of sorcerers found in the *Questions and Answers on Genesis* attributed to Elišē (5thc.), but more likely composed by Vahram Rabuni (13thc.)³⁷:

Ի միտ առ, ոչ ամենայն ինչ որ առ աչաւք է՝ ճշմարտութիւն ասի. որպէս և ոչ ստուեր մարդոյ մարդ ասի. զնմանութիւն և զկերպարանս ցուցանեն զիրաց ինչ կախարդքն. զի այլ ոչինչ կարեն ճշմարտութեամբ ցուցանել. զի

Keep in mind, not everything which appears before the eyes is said [to be] the truth. As the shadow of a man is not called a man, the sorcerers display the likeness and forms of realia, for they are not able to display anything

³³ Ex 9:9-11.

³⁴ Ex 8:19.

³⁵ Tatewac'i reiterates this notion on the ability of demons, angels, and God to change men's minds in vol. III, sect. 9, ch. 5 of the *Book of Questions* where it is clear that he is dependent on Hugh Ripelin's *Compilatio brevis theologicae veritatis*, see LA PORTA 2001, p.184, 387-9.

³⁶ Rom 1:28.

³⁷ Text published in 1928 by N. Akinean who ascribed it to Elišē, but cf. VAR-DANEAN 1929 and XAC'IKYAN 1992, p.22-24; see also LA PORTA 2001, p.119.

թէ սատանայ կերպարանի ի հրեշտակ լուսոյ, որ չէ իսկ, նոյնպէս և պաշտանեայք նորա ցուցանեն ինչ, բայց ոչ ճշմարիտ. և ոչ կարեն փոփոխել զարարածս արարչին, զի որ արարն, նա միայն կարէ փոփոխել:

ԺԶ: Հարցումն: Նա աւանիկ և Գիրք ցուցանեն թէ Եգիպտոս առնէին կախարդքն զոր ինչ առնէր Մովսէս:

Պատասխանի: Մի ընդ բարբառ բանին Հայեսցիս, այլ ընդ ճշմարտութիւն իրացն. զի թէ արդարև կարող էին կախարդքն առնել ինչ որպէս Մովսէս առնէր ճշմարտութեամբ, ընդէր՞ ապա և զՄովսէսի արարեալսն առնէին և ոչ նոր ինչ.

ուստի յայտ է թէ տեսողքն զարհուրեալք ի ճշմարիտ նշանացն Մովսէսի առ աշաւք թուէր թէ և կախարդքն այնպէս առնէին:

Վասն որոյ ի նոյն տեղում ճշմարիտ նշանն ի Մովսէսէ եղեալ՝ յանդիմանէր զստութիւն կախարդացն զի զաւազանն Մովսէսի մի վիշապ եղեալ զբազում վիշապս նոցա կլանէր. ընդէր՞ ոչ նոցայն եկուլ զՄովսէսին, այլ նոցայն կորուսեալ եղև, զի ստուեր էր որ և ոչ Հետ անգամ երևէր:

Դարձեալ յորժամ կեղն և խաղաւարտն Հալածեցին զնոսա, զի եղև կեղն և ի կախարդսն, յայտնի եղև ստութիւն նոցա որք ի Հարկէ խոստովանեցան թէ Մատն Աստուծոյ է այս. քանզի թէ կարող լեալ էին՝ զՀարուածս ի Մովսէս և յԱՀարոն զարծուցեալ էին:

else in truth; for as Satan took the form of an angel of light, which he is truly not, likewise also those who minister to him display a thing, but [it is] not true; and they are not able to alter the creations of the Creator, for He who made [them], He alone is able to alter [them].

Question 16: He indeed and scripture demonstrate that the sorcerers in Egypt did that which Moses did.

Answer: May you not look at the word of the passage, but at the truth of the matter, since if the sorcerers were truly able to do the thing as Moses did in truth, why then did they also do that which Moses had done but not something new.

Whence it is clear that [as] the onlookers were amazed by the true signs of Moses, it seemed fantastical that the sorcerers had done likewise. On account of which the true sign have come into being from Moses in the same place and countered the falseness of the sorcerers for the staff of Moses which had become a serpent ate their many serpents. Why did not theirs eat Moses'? Rather theirs were destroyed for it was a shadow and did not leave a trace.

Again, when the [plague of] ulcer[s] and abscess[es] afflicted them, since there were also ulcer[s] on the sorcerers, their falsehood became clear, they who confessed by force that this was the finger of God, because if they had been able they would have returned the afflictions to Moses and Aaron.

The author of this text may in turn have been partially relying on the *Canon of Grigor Part'ew* for his interpretation of the battle between Moses and the sorcerers³⁸:

³⁸ ADONTZ 1925-1926, p.313.

Հարցումն: Եթէ կարիցեն կախարդք
գրեութիւն արարածոց փոխել:

Պատասխանի: Եթէ Հաստատել կա-
րեն, ապա և փոխել կարեն:

Հարցումն: ԱՀա բազում լուաք եթէ
զմարդիկ փոխեն ի կերպարանս անաս-
նոց:

Պատասխանի: Ոչ ամենայն ինչ որ առ
աչաւք է ճշմարտութիւն ասի, որպէս և
ոչ ստուեր մարդոյ մարդ ասի:

Ջնանութիւն և զկերպարանս կարեն
ցուցանել, բայց ճշմարտութեամբ ոչ
կարեն ցուցանել և ոչ փոխել զարա-
րածս արարչին, զի որ արարն նա
միայն կարէ փոխել:

Հարցումն: Նա աւանիկ գիրք ցուցա-
նեն թէ առնէին կախարդքն զոր ինչ
Մովսէս առնէր:

Պատասխանի: Ընդ բարբառ բանիցն
նայիցիս՝ թէ ընդ ճշմարտութիւն իրա-
ցն: Թէ արդարեւ որպէս Մովսէսն
առնէր ճշմարտութեամբ ոչ էր պարտ
զՄովսիսի արարեալս առնել: Նա
աւանիկ ճշմարտութիւնն զոչ ճշմար-
տութիւնն յայտ առնեն, զի կանգնէր մի
վիշապն և բազում վիշապս կլանէր և
ստուեր և նմանութիւն և տեղի անգամ
ոչ երևէր:

Ապա մինչ ի կախարդքն դարձան Հա-
րուածքն՝ կեղք և խաղաւարտք՝ յա-
յտնի եղև ստութիւն նոցա. և ի Հարկէ
խոստովան եղեն թէ Չեռն Աստուծոյ
է:

Բայց թէ կարող լեալ էին զՀարուածսն
ի Մովսէս և յԱՀարովն դարձուցա-
նէին:

Question. Whether sorcerers are able
to change the nature of creations?

Answer. If they are able to establish
[them], then also they are able to
change [them].

Question. Behold we have heard
many [say] that they change men into
the forms of animals.

Answer. Not everything which is
appears before the eyes is said [to be]
the truth, as a shadow of a man is not
said [to be] a man.

They are able to show likeness and
forms, but they are not able to show in
truth nor to change the creations of the
Creator, since He who made them
alone is able to change [them].

Question. Scripture indeed demon-
strates that the sorcerers in Egypt did
that which Moses did.

Answer. Are you looking at the word
of the passage, or at the truth of the
matter? If truly as Moses did in truth,
it would not have been necessary to
do that which Moses had done. The
truth indeed makes clear that which is
not true, for he raised up one serpent
and it ate many serpents and did not
leave shadow nor likeness nor a trace.

Then while the scourges—the [plague
of] ulcers and abscesses—turned upon
the sorcerers, their falsehood became
evident and they confessed by neces-
sity that it was the hand of God.

But, if they had been able, they would
have turned the scourges upon Moses
and Aaron.

In the fourth chapter of his *Ընդդէմ Տաճկաց* ('Against the Tajiks'), Tat'ewac'i also mentions sorcerers and invokes the dictum that only the Creator can change that which He created³⁹. In proving that Christ was

³⁹ The *Ընդդէմ Տաճկաց* originally appeared as the third section in volume I of the

God, he cites the following as one of his examples: "Again, creating is the work of God, since the unfathomable power must bring that which is non-existent into existence. Now, as you say, Christ in His youth, as a joke, took earth in His hands and created birds like a bat or something else⁴⁰; and He also opened the eyes of one blind from birth, so that he saw. Now if Christ created a bird and eyes for one blind from birth, then Christ is God⁴¹. And if they then say some sorcerers [make] the forms of a man or a bird, we say to those that it is fantastical and not reality. But He who created forms, again He is able to change [them]."⁴²⁹ Tat'ewac'i's point here, as in the previous passage, is that the creations of sorcerers are not real objects but sleights of hand. By contrast, Christ, since He is God, and prophets, because God works through them,

Book of Questions. It was intentionally omitted from the Constantinople edition (1729/30) to avoid persecution by the Muslim authorities. Its original position is preserved in various early manuscripts. It is also preserved independently from the *Book of Questions* in many manuscripts. In the Jerusalem reprint (1993) of the Constantinople edition, the *Ընդդէմ Տաճկաց*—edited by Kiwlēsērean in Vienna (1930)—is appended to the *Book of Questions*. On this volume, see also DADOYAN 1996.

⁴⁰ After "something else", MS1155 of the St. James Manuscript Library of Jerusalem (1413) preserves an interesting variant which also demonstrates Tat'ewac'i's knowledge of Qur'anic traditions. It continues: "and again you say, [when] He was captured by the Jews, He created a man in likeness (*surat'* = Arab. *ṣūra*, 'likeness, form'), whom they crucified, and He Himself ascended to heaven. Now, if Christ creates a bird or a man or stretched their forms over someone, then Christ is God" (*և զարձեալ զուրբ ասէք, ըմբռնեալ ի Հրէիցն, ստեղծեաց ի սուրաթն մարդ մի, զոր խաչեցին, և ինքն էլ յերկինս: Արդ եթէ Քրիստոս ստեղծանէ թռչուն կամ մարդ կամ իւր կերպարանս ձգեաց ի վերայ ուրուք, ապա ուրեմն Աստուած է Քրիստոս*), KIWLĒSĒREAN 1930, p.106, n. 1. According to *Sura* 4:157-158, Jesus was not crucified but ascended to Allah: "And because of their [i.e. the Jews'] saying: We slew the Messiah Jesus, son of Mary, Allah's messenger—They slew him not nor crucified him, but it appeared so unto them.... [158] But Allah took him up unto Himself." Cf. also *Sura* 3:55. The last part of the variant—"or stretched their forms over someone"—is problematic as it is Tat'ewac'i's contention that Christ does not fashion mere forms that are not realities, but it suits his immediate purpose.

⁴¹ According to *Sura* 5:110, Christ created a bird from clay and cured a blind man: "and how thou [i.e., Jesus] didst shape clay as it were the likeness of a bird by My permission, and how thou didst heal him who was born blind." Cf. also *Sura* 3:49. We may also note the satirical nature of Tat'ewac'i's citation of this tradition. According to him, the Arabs claim that Jesus did this "as a joke" (*ընդ խաղս*), not by God's permission. His disdain is once again clear when he comments that the Arabs believe Jesus made "birds, like a bat or something else" (*թռչունս, որպէս ջղջիկան կամ այլ ինչ*).

⁴² *Դարձեալ ստեղծանելն զորք Աստուծոյ է զի անհուն զարուծիւն պիտոյ է զոչ զոյն ի զոյ ածել: Արդ՝ որպէս զուրբ ասէք թէ Քրիստոս ի աղայութեանն ընդ խաղս առեալ զՀոդն ի ձեռս և ստեղծանէր թռչունս, որպէս ջղջիկան կամ այլ ինչ: Այլ և [ի] ծնէ կուրին աչքն եբաց, որ տեսանէր: Արդ՝ եթէ Քրիստոս ստեղծանէ թռչուն և [ի] ծնէ կուրին աչք, ապա ուրեմն Աստուած է Քրիստոս: Եւ եթէ ասեն և կախարդք ոմանք զկերպարանս մարդոյ կամ թռչնոյ [առնեն], ասեմք թէ նոցայն առ աշտաք է և ոչ իսկութեամբ: Այլ որ արար զկերպարանս, զարձեալ նա կարէ փոխել*, KIWLĒSĒREAN 1930, p.106.

change the actual nature of objects⁴³. This objection raised against sorcerers is one which he repeats against witches, necromancers, and dream interpreters.

In his *Counsels* (*Խրատք*), Vardan Aygekc'i (1170-1235) emphasizes the nefarious aspects of sorcery much more and implores his listeners not to engage in such activity⁴⁴:

Յեա ախորիկ փախերուք ի կախար-
զութենէ, ով որդեակ իմ, զի ամենայն
կախարդ, սիրտ և Հոգի է սատանայի, և
ձեռնագրով ուրացեալ է զԱստուած և
զսատանայ պաշտէ ծածկաբար. քանզի
այս է սովորութիւն կախարդաց:
Եւ ամենայն Հեշտասէր՝ կախարդ
անուանի, քանզի մտախաբք են, և ի
զրոյ գիտութենէ տգէտք.

Երթան առ կախարդարանս և խաբին
յառասպելաբանութենէ նոցա.
զի պարծին Հպարտութեամբ զիւաց, և
ասեն թէ Աստուծով է գործս և արուե-
ստս մեր և ամենայն սրբովք նոքա, և
սրբոց անուամբ կոչեն զդևսն:

Եւ սատանայի որդեգիր տան զայն՝ որ
առ նոսա երթան:

After this [impiety], flee from sorcery,
O my children, since every sorcerer is
the heart and soul of Satan; and with a
cheirograph⁴⁵ he has denied God and
worships Satan secretly, because this
is the custom of sorcerers.

And every person [who is] libidinous
is called a sorcerer because they are
[sic] deceitful and ignorant of scrip-
tural knowledge.

They go to the places of witchcraft
and are deceived by their tales.

For they boast with the arrogance of
demons and say “our deeds and skills
are through God and all his saints”;
and by the name of the saints they call
demons.

And they give those who go to them
up for adoption to Satan.

[II]:

a. “A diviner is he who works with [his] hands and a substance such as barley, flour, sand, water, and stone, and that which he measures with

⁴³ Tat'ewac'i emphasizes the creative power of Christ by using the verb *ստեղծել*, ‘to create,’ which often refers to God's creation *ex nihilo*. Cf. Yovhannēs Orotneč'i's remark in his *Հաւաքեալ ի բանից իմաստասիրաց* (Collected from the words of philosophers): “To create is to make something from nothing” (*Ստեղծանելն է առնել ինչ յոչնէ*), AREVŠATYAN-LALAFARYAN 1956, p.354; cf. also, AREVŠATYAN 1958, p.124; and the poem by Yovhannēs T'lkuranc'i, “On the Creation of the World” (*Վասն ստեղծման Աշխարհի*), RUSSELL 1987b, p.176-187, STONE 1995; cf. also THOMSON 1992b, p.194-195.

⁴⁴ VARDAN AYGEKČ' 1956, p.58.

⁴⁵ Vardan thus draws a parallel between the contract one signs with a sorcerer and that which Adam signed with Satan according to the apocryphal *Cheirograph of Adam*. The latter recounts how after his expulsion from Eden, Adam was terrified by the night. Satan promises to bring the dawn if the first man signs a contract which enslaves him to Satan until the unborn is born and the undying dies, i.e. Jesus Christ. Cf. STONE 1997, STONE 2002, RUSSELL 1997, p.98, n. 13.

[his] palm, and everything else.” (Դիւթ է՝ որ ձեռաւք և նիւթով գործէ. որպէս գարի, և ալիւր, և աւազ, և ջուր, և քար. և այն որ թզով չափէ, և այլն ամենայն).

Yovhannēs Mayragomec’i (575-640), in his “Letter concerning conjurers’ spells and impious makers of talismans” (Թուղթ վասն Հրամայից դիւթականաց և անաւրէն յուղթողաց), denounces divination through barley (գարի), and water (ջուր)⁴⁶. Dawit’ Ganjakec’i also mentions “գարրնկէցս” (crithomancers—they who divine by means of throwing barley) and remarks that “the chief of these divinations is divination by grains” (զլուխ դիւթութեանց այսոցիկ է ՀատաՀմայութիւն)⁴⁷.

Vardan Aygekc’i likewise repudiates the casting of lots and of grains in his *Counsels* (Խրատք), but ascribes these practices to sorcerers rather than to diviners⁴⁸:

Իսկ որ Հաւատայ սուտ և խաբող բանից նոցա, և առնու թուղթ ի նոցանէ, կամ դեղ ինչ և կամ ծրար, կամ կապք կախարդութեան, թէ ի Հարցէ առնու, թէ ի թովչէ, թէ ի աստղաբաշխէ, թէ ի վիճկընկեցէ, թէ ի Հատընկեցէ, և զայն կապէ յանձն իւր վասն աւգնականութեան և փրկութեան՝ նա զսատանայ և զգեքն ի կապել յանձն իւր, և աւտարացեալ է ի Քրիստոսէ և ի Հոգւոյ նորա և ի Հայրական շնորհացն:

Թէ քահանայ զայս առնէ՝ մի իշխեսցէ բնաւ պատարագել զՔրիստոս, որպէս գրեցին և նշովեցին սուրբ Հարքն որ ի Նիկեա ժողովեցան:

And he who believes their [i.e., sorcerers] false and deceiving words, and takes a letter from them, or some physic, or packet [of charms], or bonds of sorcery, whether he takes from divination or from a spell, or from astrology, or from casting lots, or from casting grains, and binds that to himself for the sake of assistance and salvation, he [binds] Satan and the demons to himself and becomes estranged from Christ and from his Spirit and from His Paternal graces. If a priest does this, he does not have the authority at all to celebrate Christ, as the Holy Fathers who convened at Nicaea⁴⁹ wrote and condemned.

⁴⁶ YOVHANNĒS MAYRAGOMEC’I 1860, p.191; 193-194.

⁴⁷ DAWIT’ GANJAKEC’I 1961, p.82. Simeon of Ajjnik, in his sermon “On drunkards and minstrels” (Վասն արբեցողաց և գուսանաց), also includes crithomancers (գարրնկէց) in his list of magical practices, RUSSELL 1987a, p.442.

⁴⁸ VARDAN AYGEKC’I 1956, p.58-59.

⁴⁹ There is no specific reference to sorcerers in the canons to the Council of Nicaea; Vardan is likely referring to the twelfth canon which reprimands priests who engage “in adultery, in fornication, in theft, in greed, in vengeance, and especially those who do inconceivable evils and thence draw near to the mystery and to the holy altar, that is, offer Mass,” (ի չնութիւն, ի պոռնկութիւն, ի գողութիւն, յոխակալութիւն, մանաւանդ զանՀնարին աղետան որ գործեն և անգին ի խորՀուրդն և ի սուրբ սեղանն մերձենան, այսինքն ի պատարագն մատուցանել), KG I:124-125; cf. also Apostolic Canon 15, KG I:37-38.

Եթէ ժողովրդականքն զայս անեն,
նա ուրացողք են Աստուծոյ և խոստո-
վանողք դիւսց. վասն որոյ երազովք
խաբեն զնոսա դեքն և ուրախացուցա-
նեն և կամ զարհուրեցուցանեն:

If lay people do this, they are deniers
of God and confessors of demons; on
account of which, demons deceive
them with dreams and cause them to
rejoice or terrify them.

In his commentary to the Psalms, Esayi Nč'ec'i, the teacher of Tat'ewac'i's teacher, notes that Armenians practice "flour divination" (ալիւրադիւթքն), and "barley divination," (զարէդիւթքն)⁵⁰. Ališan cites another definition of դիւթ by an Armenian author which resembles the one Tat'ewac'i provides: "A diviner [is] he who divines barely, flour, and water" (Դիւթ որ զգարի և զալիւր և զջուր դիւթէ)⁵¹. Ališan does not furnish a reference, thus, the relationship between this explanation and Tat'ewac'i's cannot be determined.

As Aygekc'i suggests, this form of divination was popular and not limited to the laity. In the thirteenth-century, the Dominican mission-ary, Simon of Saint-Quentin, remarked that the Armenian clergy performed acts of divination by means of barley grains: "*monachi quoque et abbates et episcopi potationibus vacant etiam plusquam laici. Sunt etiam monachi ac presbyteri publici usuratii et symoniaci. Multique illorum sacerdotes in diuinationibus errant, ex inspectione granorum et huiusmodi.*" From Simon's report, this information found its way into a chapter of Vincent of Beauvais' encyclopedic *Speculum historiale*⁵².

More recently, the practice of barley divination has been recorded in Lori in northern Armenia. The diviner takes three, five, or seven grains of barley and marks them individually. Each grain possesses a different meaning; one may represent a saint, destruction, a young boy, or a young girl, etc.. The diviner collects them in his left hand and covers them with his right. He then shakes the grains three times. Finally, the diviner picks them up with his right hand and pronounces his augury according to the order of the grains. According to Lalayean, the local population would ascertain the cause of a sickness, the sex of an unborn

Canon 62 of the second Council of Nicaea, KG II:83, does anathematize anyone who may be a spell-caster (թող) or a sorcerer (կախարդ), but it is unlikely that Vardan is referring to this council.

⁵⁰ ALIŠAN 1910, p.405.

⁵¹ ALIŠAN 1910, p.404.

⁵² RICHARD 1965, XXXI, 98, p.61; VINCENTIUS BELLOVACENSIS 1965, p.1266. Also cited in PELLIOU 1924, p.246, n. 1. On Simon and his account, see also GUZMAN 1972.

child, or whether someone is a thief, among other things, by this means⁵³.

There is also evidence for the use of water, sand, and stones in modern Armenian prognosticatory practices. On Holy Thursday, girls perform a rite of fortune telling which involves water 'stolen' from seven sources the day before. In each bucket they drop a stone or some sand, and seven types of grass or flowers and twigs. Some personal object is also placed in the bucket and a designated girl, who is veiled, removes the items one by one and fortunes are told⁵⁴. A lady originally from Erzinka (Erzincan) related that children could foretell matters by means of lecanomancy (*i.e.* staring into a bowl of water). She reported that "a cloth was thrown over the child's head and he gazed into a glass of water."⁵⁵

[III]:

a. "the flights and cacklings of chickens" (*գլթուիչս և զկոիչս Հաւուց*)

Dawit' Ganjakec'i reports that "if a cock crows towards evening, they draw auguries. And if the call of the crowing comes from the woods, they cut off its head."⁵⁶ According to Anania Širakac'i (7th c.), storks were able to predict the weather: "When storks descend upon a lake with a cry, it means rain."⁵⁷ Vanakan Vardapet (1180-c.1251) commented that the Phrygians originated the practice of divination by the "sound of birds" (*ձայն թռչնոց*)⁵⁸. T'ovma Mecopec'i (15th c.), a disciple of Tat'ewac'i, discusses "sorcerers who divined by the roots of trees and the sounds of birds."⁵⁹

⁵³ LALAYEAN 1903, p.232. I would like to thank Professor James Russell for providing me with this text.

⁵⁴ RUSSELL 1987a, p.377. For a full description of this practice and others connected with it, see RUSSELL 1987a, ch. 12.

⁵⁵ VILLA/MATOSSIAN 1982, p.144. This resembles the ancient Greek practice as described by M. Nilsson: "A medium, an innocent boy, was chosen after he had been tested and found suitable.... The medium, with his eyes shut or bandaged, lay on his belly, with his face over a vessel containing water," LUCK 1985, p.254, citing M.P. Nilsson, *Greek Piety*, trans. H.J. Rose (New York: Norton, 1969), p.146ff.

⁵⁶ *առ երեկս թէ աքաղաղն խոսի, Հմայեն: Եւ թէ ի մայրեաց ածիցն ձայն աքաղաղի, Հատանեն զգլուխն*, DAWIT' GANJAKEC'I 1961, p.81. This practice is also performed amongst the Persians, see MASSÉ 1954, p.192-193.

⁵⁷ *Յորժամ արագիլք ի ծովակոյն իջանեն ձայնիւ անձրևս նշանակէ*, GREPPIN 1978, p.19.

⁵⁸ ALIŠAN 1910, p.391, unfortunately does not provide the reference.

⁵⁹ *կախարդք որ յարմատս ծառաց և ի ձայնս թռչնոց զիւթէին*, ALIŠAN 1910, p.392; also cited by RUSSELL, 1987, p.442.

This practice was still alive at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth in the Armenian regions of Lori and Varanda. In Lori, “swallows, doves, and magpies are generally reckoned as good portents; the owl and raven, as bad.”⁶⁰ A cock that crows when he is slaughtered foretells the coming of a guest. When a chicken cackles from on top of a perch, the inhabitants immediately catch it and place it on the *երթիկ* (smoke-hole). If it goes towards the corner, it is a good sign and they give it grain, but if it goes towards the door, it is a bad sign and they immediately slaughter it. If a magpie crows, a guest is coming. If an owl roosts over a house, one of its inhabitants is going to die. If a raven caws, it will rain, but if it screeches, an animal will kill for something to eat. When the villagers hear its voice they say “may you eat your head” (*գլուխդ ուտես*)⁶¹. If a raven turns its cackling head towards a house, it means that that household will have good luck, but if it turns its tail, the omen is bad. If on the ninth of March a returning stork pecks holding a piece of a worm in its mouth, then there will be a war and carnage, but if he has cereal in his mouth there will be an abundant crop⁶².

In Varanda, too, the sounds and actions of birds and fowl portend a variety of happenings. If a magpie crows on top of a house it means that a guest or foreigner is coming. If a magpie crows turning its face towards the house, the inhabitants will receive good fortune, but if it turns its tail, they will receive bad. Whence they say “if it is good⁶³, change your position, if it is bad⁶⁴, turn away your face” (*թէ խէր ա, տեղդ փոխ տուր, թէ չառ ա, երեսդ չուր տուր*). If a tree-sparrow swims, a raven crows, and a green frog croaks, it will rain. If an owl roosts on top of a house at night, someone from that household will die. Similarly, if a chicken cockle-doodle-does like a cock, someone from the household will die. In order to prevent this, they slaughter the chicken at the threshold of the door. If a chicken at night cries at an improper time something evil is going to happen. Immediately they sprinkle embers towards the chicken coop so that the evil may go to the chickens. If a crow caws over the head of a passerby, something bad will happen to him and he yells “O crow⁶⁵, be good; o crow, be good” (*Ս. քաշ, խէր. ա քաշ, խէր*)⁶⁶.

⁶⁰ LALAYEAN 1903, p.229: *Թռչուններից ծիծեռնակը, աղաւնին, կաչաղակն ընդհանրապէս Համարում են բարեգութակ, իսկ բուն, ագռաւը չարագութակ.*

⁶¹ This saying, presumably, reverses the effects of the bad omen.

⁶² LALAYEAN 1903, p.230.

⁶³ *խէր* < Arab. *ḵair*, ‘good.’

⁶⁴ *չառ* < Arab. *ṣarr*, ‘evil.’

⁶⁵ *քաշ* = *ագռաւ*, ‘crow,’ MALXASEANC’ 1944-45, s.v..

⁶⁶ LALAYEAN 1897, p.239-240.

This practice was also condemned by the Church Fathers; John Chrysostom and Eusebius of Alexandria denounce the practice of observing the cries of birds. Both authors attribute this activity to Jews and criticize it as being unworthy of Christians⁶⁷.

b. “sound of fire” (*ձայն կրակի*).

Simēon bishop of Ałjnik⁶⁸ includes ‘fire interpreters’ (*կրակաՀան*) in a list of magical arts in his sermon “On drunkards and minstrels” (*Վասն արբեցողաց և գուսանաց*)⁶⁸. Again this practice is attested in the region of Lori. When the inhabitants hear the cackling of wood burning, they reckon that someone is speaking about them. In order to determine who the slanderer is they begin reciting names. The name pronounced at the moment when the sound stops is that of the perpetrator⁶⁹.

c. “beams, a door” (*աճառաց, դրան*).

Arm. *աճառ* can refer to different things. In Esther 2:3,9,12, it refers to the cosmetics with which the virgins who were prepared for King Ahasuerus were treated. In Jeremiah 2:22, it refers to a type of soap. The NBHL also lists *pigmentum, herba, nervus, and fibra* as meanings. But a ‘beam’ or ‘joint’ which supports a roof seems most appropriate here. The beams may also be the lintels of doors. In Syria, numerous late antique magical formulae have been discovered inscribed on the lintels protecting homes from the evil eye⁷⁰.

The typical Armenian house possessed only two entrances: the *երթ/երթիկ* (‘smoke hole’; also *երտիկ*; *էրտիկ*, etc.) and the door. Both of these were significant in Armenian superstition as they were the only entrances through which demons could enter; great care was thus taken in protecting these entrances. For example, chapter twelve of Grigor Narekac'i's *Book of Lamentation* (*Մատենան Ողբերգութեան*), which now forms part of the night office of the Armenian Church, also serves to protect the *երթիկ* and door from the entrance of demons at night: “Sign with the sign of the cross the translucent smoke-hole of this roof with your name / Guard the roof of this temple with your hand / Trace the door jambs of this room with your blood.”⁷¹

⁶⁷ DICKIE 1995, p.28-29.

⁶⁸ RUSSELL 1987a, p.442.

⁶⁹ LALAYEAN 1903, p.233.

⁷⁰ PRENTICE 1906, provides a description and analysis of some of these inscriptions.

⁷¹ *Տեառնդրեա քո անուամբդ զլուսանցոյց երդ յարկիս / Պարփակեա քո ծեռամբդ զառաստաղ տանարիս / Գծադրեա քո արեամբդ զմուտ սենոց սենեկիս*, GRIGOR NAREKAC'I 1985, p.291, lines, 56-58. The last point is a clear reference to Ex. 12:7, 22-23.

Other prayers liken the door and *երթիկ* to iron, and declare the protection offered by Christ, saints, and ecclesiastical implements: “Our house is the house of the Command⁷² / Christ is the Ruler of the house / From wall to wall, it is a pillar of iron / The priest’s mantle covers the smoke-hole / The crozier is the lock of the door”; “I have a house of iron / Its walls are holy steel / Christ lodges within / The door of the door is locked / Silver fortifies the smoke-hole / Anyone approaching the door turns back / Anyone approaching the smoke-hole turns to stone.”⁷³

Armenians not only conceived of doors and thresholds as possible entrances for demons, but also as objects which bestowed favors upon the inhabitants of the house; the ability to help cure the sick and to bless a new bride was attributed to them⁷⁴. In Tat’ew, if a door was perceived to be withholding their gifts, people endeavored to coax it through amulets buried beneath it. If the magical charms were ineffective, the old door was walled up and a new door made⁷⁵.

According to Dawit’ Ganjakec’i, diviners “augur upon their own and strangers’ entering and leaving through the door of the house”⁷⁶; it is most probable that it is to this practice that Tat’ewac’i is alluding in the passage.

d. “weasel” (*աքիս*).

Աքիս (‘weasel’, ‘polecat’) is a rare word in Armenian. I have not found any ethnographic accounts which record the use of weasels in auguries. Here it is perhaps a reference to the mythological *scholia* of

⁷² MALXASEANC’ 1944-45, does not have an entry for *Հրամատուն*. There is an entry for *իշխանատուն*, which Malxaseanc’ analyzes as *իշխանի տուն*, ‘house of the ruler,’ and I have taken *Հրամատուն* in the same way, i.e. *Հրամանի տուն*, ‘house of the command.’ It could also be an abbreviated form of *Հրամանատու*, ‘commander,’ with the definite article, -ն.

⁷³ *Մեր տուն Հրամատուն է / Քրիստոս իշխանատուն է / Պատէ պատ երկթէ տուն է / Փիլոնն էրթիկոյ ծածկոյ է / Խաչ գաւազան դռան գոչ է / Տունն ունիմ էրկատէ / Պատերը սուրբ պողպատէ / Քրիստոս մէջն օթեան է / Դուռ դռան գոչ է / Խալխան էրթիկին ամրոյ է / Դռան գալող ետ դանայ / Երտիկ գալող քար դանայ*, LALAYEAN 1892, p.11-12. Cf. ABELIAN 1899, p.34, for a German translation of a composite of these prayers; and ESSABAL 1981, p.266, for an English translation of the German. Another interesting prayer likens the door and the smoke-hole to the Virgin Mary and St. Grigor *Lusaworič*: “Our house is iron-filled / The walls are steel-filled / The Holy Virgin is the door / St. Grigor is the smoke-hole” (*Մեր տունն լիք էրկաթ է / Պատերը լիք փողպատ է / Սուրբ Կուսը դուռն է / Սուրբ Գրիգոր էրտիքն է*), LALAYEAN 1892, p.12. For an example from the region of Van, see, RUSSELL 1994, p.40-42.

⁷⁴ ESSABAL 1981, p.267-268.

⁷⁵ ESSABAL 1981, p.269.

⁷⁶ *Ի մտանէն և լեւանէ իւրեանց կամ աւտարաց ընդ դուրս տանն Հմայեն*, DAWIT’ GANJAKEC’I 1961, p.82.

Pseduo-Nonnos attached to Gregory Nazianzenus' *Orations*. Originally written in Greek in the sixth century, the *scholia* were soon translated into Syriac along with the *Orations* and revised in the early seventh century⁷⁷. The *scholia* were also translated into Armenian at an unknown date⁷⁸. In the sixty-fifth Armenian *historia*⁷⁹ of *Invective I* entitled *Յաղապս Հմայականին* ('Concerning augury'), the author reports the following: "And house observation is when by interpreting things which happen in the house we say that it signifies something [either] because a snake or a mouse or a weasel⁸⁰ has appeared on the roof, or [because] honey, or oil, or wine, or ashes have been spilt, or something else, we say it signifies something. But K'senokratēs [Xenokrates] composed these things."⁸¹ Whether such a belief concerning weasels existed in fourteenth-century Armenia remains uncertain⁸².

e. "comb" (բէճ).

Dawit' Ganjak'ec'i likewise refers to this interesting practice: "And all the craftsmen at the entrance of the year draw auguries from their

⁷⁷ BROCK 1971, p.3. The *Orations* with which the *scholia* are concerned are: *Oratio in sancta Lumina* (cited as *Epiphany*), *Oratio funebris in laudem Basilii Magni*, and the two *Invectivae adversus Iulianum*.

⁷⁸ BROCK 1971, p.12. Manandian published an edition of the Armenian in 1903 based upon two thirteenth-century Ējmiacin manuscripts (Matenadaran MSS 1672 and 2101), MANANDIAN 1903, p.220-221. The Armenian version is important as it possesses an additional *scholia* to the *Oratio in laudem sancti martyris Cypriani*, cf. BROCK 1971, p.13 for a translation.

⁷⁹ Arm 65=Syr 72, cf. BROCK 1971, p.116-117 for a translation of the Syriac.

⁸⁰ Syr. *kkwštā* ('weasel'), Gk. *galē* ('weasel'). Weasels are mentioned two other times in the *scholia*: In the twenty-fourth *historia* of the *scholia* to *Epiphany*, *Յաղապս զեռնոց և սոցնոց* ('Concerning reptiles and creeping things'): "Because the Egyptians used to worship crocodiles, snakes, weasels, and other things which are among frivolous [things], and certain kinds of fish, while from the honor of irrational [beings] they incurred shame for themselves" ('Քանզի պաշտէին եգիպտացիքն զկրոկոտիզոսս և զաւձս, և զաքիսս, և զայլս ոմանս ի թարմատարացն, և զազգս ոմանս ի ձգանց, յանբանից պատուոյն անձանց իւրեանց անարգանս յարմարելով'), MANANDIAN 1903, p.232; and in the twenty-eighth *historia* of the *scholia* to *Invective II*, *Յաղապս Իսեայ և մենդազուցն* (Concerning Isis and the Mendac'ik' [Mendetes]): "But that which he [i.e. Gregory] wrote 'beasts of altered [shapes] and composite' means this certain thing: just as I too saw in Alexandria some little images having dogs' heads and another weasel's head budding next to them" (Այլ որ գրեալ է զազանս ալլալոցս և շարագրեալս ալսպիսի իմն առէ, որպէս և ես տեսի յԱղեքսանդրիա պատկերս ոմանս փոքունս, ունելով գլուխս շանց և առ նորաւք բուռեալ այլ գլուխ աքսի), MANANDIAN 1903, p.293. In both 'weasel' = Syr. *qwezē*, Gr. *ailouros*.
⁸¹ Իսկ անագիտական է, յորժամ զպատաճեալսն ի տան մեկնելով ասիցենք, թէ զայս ինչ նշանակէ. քանզի ի ջեղուն երեւեալ աւձ կամ մուկն, կամ աքիս, կամ թափեալ մեզր կամ ձէտ, կամ գինի, կամ մոխիր, կամ այլ ինչ ասենք զայս ինչ նշանակէ: Այլ զայստսիկ Քսենոկրատէս շարագրեաց, MANANDIAN 1903, p.271-272.

⁸² We may note, however, the association of weasels with bad omens in Europe, cf. SCHOTT 1935, p.13-14.

own crafts. The blacksmith strikes the anvil with a hammer; the weaver pulls a thread [from] the shuttle and strikes it three times with his comb, draws the thread [on to] the distaff and puts that round a spindle.”⁸³

Although no mention is made of it here or in Tat'ewac'i, these acts are related to the legend of the imprisonment of Artawazd. According to Movsēs Xorenac'i, when King Artasēs (Artaxias I) was on his death-bed, his son, Artawazd, was angered by the destruction caused by those mourning his father's death. He berated his father that after the latter died he would be the king of ruins. His father cursed him: “If you ride to the hunt up on Greater Ararat [*աղատ Մասիս*] the ‘brave ones’ [*բաջր*] will take you and carry you up on Greater Ararat; may you remain there and not see the light!”⁸⁴ Xorenac'i then continues:

The old women tell stories about this one, that he is imprisoned in a cave, bound with iron chains, and two dogs gnaw at the chains daily. He tries to go out and make an end of the world, but the bonds, they say, are strengthened by the sound of the hammering of the blacksmiths. On account of which, in our times as well, many blacksmiths, following the fable, strike the anvil three or four times on the first day of the week, so that, they say, the chains of Artawazd may be strengthened⁸⁵.

The story likewise appears in *The Canon of Grigor Part'ew* [the Illuminator] (*Կանոն Սրբոյն Գրիգորի Պարթևի*), whose author remarks that only those people who worship demons actually believe it:

Հարցումն: Ասեն. քաջաց եւ վիշապաց տեարք են ի լերինս բարձունս եւ բնակութիւնք եւ զԱլեքսանդր կապեալ ունին ի Հռոմ եւ զԱրտաւազդ ի Մասիս եւ զԱրուանդ ի գետս եւ ի մառանս:

Question. They say [that] the lords and dwellings of ‘brave ones’ [*բաջր*] and dragons [*վիշապ*] are in the mountain heights and they have bound Alexander in Rome and Artawazd in Masis and Aruand in rivers and in cellars.

⁸³ Եւ ամենայն արուեստաւորք ի մուտս տարոյն յարուեստն իւրեանց Հմայեն: Դարբինն կանաւ մի Հարկանէ զսալ, ոստայնանկ թել մի քարչէ, կկոչէ եւ բիճաւ երիս Հարկանէ, մանոցն թալ մի ձգէ եւ տայ զայն զիլկաւ, DAWIT' GANJAKEC'I 1961, p.81.

⁸⁴ Եթէ դու յորս Հեծցիս յԱղատն ի վեր Մասիս, զքեզ կայցին քաջք, տարցին յԱղատն ի վեր ի Մասիս, անդ կայցես, եւ զոյս մի տեսցես, MOVSĒS XORENAC'I 1991, II.61, p. 191. On this legend, cf. RUSSELL 1987a, p.400-407.

⁸⁵ Զրուցեն զսմանէ եւ պառուունք, եթէ արգելեալ կայ յայրի միում կապեալ երկաթի շղթայիւք. եւ երկու շունք Հանապազ կրծելով զշղթայսն՝ ջանայ ելանել եւ առնել վախճան աշխարհի. ալ ի ձայնէ կոանակարութեան դարբնաց զօրանան, ասեն, կապանքն: Վասն որոյ եւ առ մերով իսկ Ժամանակաւ բացումք ի դարբնաց, զՀետ երթալով առասպելին՝ յաւուր միաշաբաթուջ երիցս կամ չորիցս բախեն զսայն, զի զօրացին, ասեն, շղթայքն Արտաւազդայ, MOVSĒS XORENAC'I 1991, II.61., p. 191.

Պատասխանի: Յորդուց մարդկան կեն-
դանի են Ենովք և Եղիա, այլ ամե-
նեցուն զմա՛հ ճաշակեալ է:

Բայց մոլորութիւն դիւաց խաբեաց
զդիւապաշտս Հայոց թէ՛ զԱրտաւազդ
ոմն արգելեալ է վիշապաց ի Մասիս և
է կենդանի և նա ելանելոց է և զաս-
խարհ ունելոց:

Եւ ուրումն յանմիտ իշխանաց Հայոց
Հարցեալ զղձապատումն Հմաւորակա-
նա⁸⁶ թէ՛ Էր՞բ լինիցի Արտաւազդայ զալ
ելանել ի կապանաց, և նոցա ասացեալ.

Եթէ ոչ կամիս զելանելն նորա, Հրա-
ման տուր ընդ ամենայն աշխարհս
Հայոց դարբնաց, որ աւր Նաւասարդի
է, [զի] ամենայն դարբին կոանաւ
կոփէ ի վերայ սալի իւրոյ և երկաթք
Արտաւազդայ անդրէն Հաստատին:

Ջնոյն Հրաման կատարեն այժմ. ամե-
նայն դարբին կոփէ կոանաւ իւրով ի
վերայ սալի:

Answer. Among the sons of man
Enoch and Elijah are alive, but all the
rest have tasted death.

But the error of demons has deceived
those Armenians who worship de-
mons that dragons have imprisoned
some Artawazd in Masis and he is
alive and will arise and possess the
world.

And some of the mindless Armenian
princes asked this auguring sooth-
sayer: “When will Artawazd come
[and] arise from his chains?” And he
said to them:

“If you do not wish for his arising,
give the order to the blacksmiths
throughout this realm of Armenia, that
on the day of Nawasard [New Year’s
day], every blacksmith should beat
with a hammer on his anvil and there-
by strengthen the irons of Artawazd.”

They execute that same order today;
every blacksmith beat with his ham-
mer on their anvil.

The thirteenth-century *Universal History* (Պատմութիւն տիեզերական) attributed to Vardan Barjrbec’i preserves this version of the legend in which the blacksmiths “strike their anvils with a hammer on Nawasard to this day” (ի Նաւասարդի կոանաւ Հարկանեն զսալն մինչև ցայսօր)⁸⁷. As was mentioned, Ganjakec’i connects the ritual of the blacksmiths with that of the weavers and it is possible that the practice spread to other crafts.

f. “slippers” (մուճակ).

I have not found a reference to the use of slippers as a prognosticatory tool in classical or medieval Armenian literature. An interesting parallel, however, can be found among the beliefs of contemporary Western Armenians living in the Detroit area. According to them, “if a dog

⁸⁶ According to the NBHL, Հմաւորական is unattested; it is possibly an error for Հմալական.

⁸⁷ Vardan’s text is quoted by RUSSELL 1987a, p.402-3 citing A. Łanalanyan, *Avandapatum*, Erevan, 1969, p.362 (no. 805 b).

howls, a member of your family will die soon. The remedy is to turn the slippers of the person whom you think may be in danger upside down.”⁸⁸

[IV]:

a. “And the sorcerer [is] he who buries some vessel in the earth, [or] ropes, wax, or iron; and with various charms they apply their art” (*Իսկ կախարդն՝ որ անաթ ինչ թաղէ ի հող. կապս, կամ մոմ, կամ երկաթ, և պէս պէս [բ]ժժանաւք յարմարեն զարուեստն*).

Ališan cites an Armenian author whose definition is almost identical to Tat'ewac'i's: “They call sorcerers [they] who bury vessels in the ground, with various charms according to their art.”⁸⁹ Unfortunately, Ališan does not indicate where he found this information. Ališan also notes that Vanakan Vardapet, in a discussion of the origins of various magical arts, explains that some perform sorcery “through burying a vessel in the ground” (*աման թաղելով ի հող*)⁹⁰.

Two lists similar to this one in the *Book of Questions* appear in Mayragomec'i's homily against magical practices. The author ridicules those who say that they are going to medical doctors rather than magicians to be cured of illness because they believe the duty of a doctor to be “to bring forth cures for one according to his ailments, but not to work talismans, to prattle Satanic mumbo-jumbo, or to take salt and coal, red thread, and iron, and water, and to make charmed beads, or to put on inscribed phylactery, or the bones of fish and lizards, to bind packets of charms to the hand and eye and neck.”⁹¹ The second and longer list enumerates various techniques of divination including iron (*երկաթ*) and wax (*մոմ*), amongst other items⁹².

Vardan Aygekc'i mentions such ‘packets’ of charms⁹³ as does the author of the *Anonymous life of Gēorg Skewřac'i* (c. 1256-1301), who

⁸⁸ VILLA/MATOSSIAN 1982, p.145. A similar practice is performed in Persia, cf. MASSÉ 1954, p.97.

⁸⁹ *Կախարդք ասեն որ անօթս տաղեն ի գետնի, բժժանօք ինչ պէս պէս ըստ արուեստին*, ALIŠAN 1910, p.392.

⁹⁰ ALIŠAN 1910, p.391, who unfortunately does not provide a reference.

⁹¹ *զարմանս ըստ ցաւոցն նմա մատուցանել. այլ ոչ եթէ յուռութս յուռիել, և զատանալական բարբանջս բարբանջել. կամ աղ և ածուղ, կամ ասղենի առնուլ կարմիր, և երկաթ, և ջուր, և ուլունս ուտել, և կամ գիր պաշարան ընդ անձն արկանել, և կամ զոսկերս ձկանց և սողնոց, զծրարս բժժանաց ի ձեռին և ի յակին և ի պարանոցի կապել*, YOVHANNĒS MAYRAGOMEC'Ī 1860, p.191.

⁹² YOVHANNĒS MAYRAGOMEC'Ī 1860, p.193-194. Mayragomec'i obviously preferred to keep the medical trade in the hands of the Church.

⁹³ Text cited above, p.185.

also notes the use of bones or carcasses in magical practice⁹⁴. The author of this hagiography relates the following story while listing the miracles performed by the *vardapet* Gēorg Skewriac⁹⁵:

Պատահեաց սրբոյս երբեմն կին մի՝ որ կախարդական արուեստիւն զբազումս անձինս ի կորուստ տանէր և մեծամեծ ոճիրս սատանայական ս[պաս]աւորութեամբն գործէր:

Եւ սուրբս Հոգւոյն սրբոյ զաւրութեամբն, որ միացեալ էր յինքն, քակտեաց զմեքենայս նորա և զծրարս բժժանացն, որ ունէր, և զոսկերս զմեռելոտեացն Հրոյ ճարակ ետ առնել:

Իսկ մերձաւորքն ասէին առ սուրբս. Միգուցէ չար ինչ առնիցէ քեզ, քանզի անՀնարին գիտէ գործել:

Ասէ սուրբս. Զոր ինչ և կարես առնել ինձ չար՝ արա, բայց այլ ումեք անուամբն աստուծոյ մի՝ զաւրասցիս առնել:

Եւ ի բանտ ետ տանել: Եւ ի յորով աւուրս անդ մաշեցաւ և յորժամ խոտացաւ ոչ գործել, Հրաման ետ սուրբս արձակել զնա:

Once a woman who had led many people to their destruction through the magical art and committed villainy through her satanical service met our saint [Gēorg].

And our saint, with the power of the Holy Spirit which was united in him, dissolved her machinations and packets of charms which she had, and set the bones of the carcasses [which she had used] on fire.

And those who were nearby said to our saint: “Perhaps she will do some evil to you because she knows [how] to perform the impossible.”

Our saint said: “Any evil indeed you want to do to me, do it, but you will not be empowered to do [it] except by the name of God.”

And he put her in irons. And she wasted away during the entire day there and when she promised not to perform [any evil], our saint gave the order to release her.

Lalayan recorded an interesting practice called ‘wax melting’ (*մուծ Հալիլ*) which was used for those stricken with fear, that is, haunted by someone deceased. The ‘wax melter’ (*մուծ Հալող*) after making the sign of the cross on his face three times takes out a needle, which he normally keeps on himself and never gives to anyone, and presses it into a wax candle. After whispering the Our Father and reciting the names of saints, he places the candle on a hook or tongs which have been heated. The candle melts and flows into a bowl of water taking some form. The ‘wax melter’ takes the wax from the water and from its shape or from the lines which form at the top of the bowl prognosticates what will improve the

⁹⁴ BAŁDASARYAN 1964; see also BUNDY 1984.

⁹⁵ BAŁDASARYAN 1964, p.422-423.

afflicted person's condition. This action is repeated three times. After performing the prognostications, he wraps the candle in cotton, seals it with thread, and gives it to the sick person, who puts it under his feet at night. In the morning, the patient puts the wrapped candle under his washing bowl, washes, and, without saying a word, buries it under a tree of the house pouring the water over it. Sometimes the patient sticks a nail in the cotton and buries it either in the threshold or in the tomb of that dead person whom they fear. The 'wax melters' are only able to receive the ability to do this from saints through a dream⁹⁶. A similar custom is also reported to have been performed in New Julfa⁹⁷.

[V]:

a. "The witch is that one who give[s] form to the dead from abysses and chasms; demons appear in the form of men, which they call 'demon-calling' or 'hazimat' '" (Վշուկն այն է, որ ի վշաց և յանդնորոց մեռեալս կերպարանեն. զեք ի կերպս մարդկան երեին. զոր զեակոչ ասեն և Հազա-իմաթ).

As noted, Tat'ewac'i bases his interpretation of *վշուկ* (trans. Gr. *engastrimythos*, 'diviner of entrails') on a false etymology derived from *վիշ* ('abyss'). It is more likely that it is to be derived from a Mlr. form of OIr, **vithuka* — from *vaēth* — 'to ascertain for legal purposes (through divination)'.⁹⁸

Ališan asserts that Arm. *Հազիմաթ*, a *hapax*, is transliterated from Arab. *hazimat*, which he translates as 'evils, dangers'⁹⁹. I have not found such a word in an Arabic dictionary nor do any forms of *hzm* ('to defeat') indicate any semantic relationship with demonology. Ačāryan, citing this passage, translates it as 'a type of witch' (*մի տեսակ վշուկ*) but does not provide an etymology¹⁰⁰. Malxaseanc' likewise defines *Հազիմաթ* as a *վշուկ* without explanation¹⁰¹. Durean is undoubtedly correct when he provides 'azīma, 'decision, incantation, spell,' as the underlying Arabic word¹⁰². The *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-safā'* ('Epistles of the Brothers of

⁹⁶ LALAYEAN 1897, p.234-235.

⁹⁷ ABGAREAN 1964, p. 407.

⁹⁸ RUSSELL 1987a, p.442, citing E. Benveniste "Études iraniennes," *Transactions of the Philological Society* (London), 1945, p.75.

⁹⁹ ALIŠAN 1910, p.400.

¹⁰⁰ AČĀRYAN 1971-79, s.v.. He rightly dismisses K'ajuni's suggestion of a parallel with Latin *hasena* = *asena* = *arena*.

¹⁰¹ MALXASEANC' 1944-45, s.v..

¹⁰² DUREAN 1933, p.129.

Purity,' 10th c.) mentions *'ilm al-ʿazā'im* as one of the magic sciences¹⁰³. Ḥājī ʿAlī (17th c.) in his *Kaṣf az-zunūn* ('Examination of Beliefs'), which provides a detailed classification of Arabic magic, also includes *'ilm al-ʿazā'im*—described as demonic conjurations or incantations—among magical practices¹⁰⁴.

Tat'ewac'i later addresses the question of witches in his commentary on 1Kgs (=1Sam) in v. 7, sect. 12 of the *Book of Questions* entitled "That witches and divinations are false" (*Թէ սուտ են վհուկք և դիւթք*)¹⁰⁵:

Հարցումն: Վհուկ կինն որպէս յարոյց զՍամուէլ. կամ որպէս զառաջիկայն պատմէր:

Պատասխանի: Վհուկք և դեք ոչ զառաջիկայն գիտեն և ոչ մեռեալս յարուցանեն: Այլ որպէս յարուցեալն նմանութիւն է ոչ իսկութիւն, նոյնպէս և խոսքն սուտ է և ոչ ճշմարիտ:

Եւ դեք ոչ միայն զապագայն ոչ գիտեն, այլ և զներկայ խորհուրդն ոչ ճանաչեն:

Նաև զանցեալ ճշմարիտն և զբարին ի միտ ոչ ունին:

Եւ այս ցուցանի ի Սաուղայ. որ այլակերպեալ գնաց առ վհուկն և ասէ՝ Հան ինձ զՍամուէլ:

Եւ նախ՝ զի ոչ ճանաչեաց վհուկն զՍաուղ աստի յայտ է, զի զովեաց զնա և պարսաւեաց ասելով՝ Սաուղ կոտորեաց զվհուկսն, և դու կամիս սատակել զիս: Եւ թէ զգէնքն ոչ ծանեաւ, զիարժ գիտորդութիւն ճանաչէր:

Q. The female witch, how did she cause Samuel to appear and how did she predict the future?

A. Witches and demons do not know the future nor do they raise the dead. But as that which is raised is a likeness and not reality, so too are their words false and not true.

And demons do not only not know the future, but they also do not recognize present intention.

And they also do not have in mind the past truth and the good.

And this is shown by Saul who went disguised to the witch and said: "Bring up Samuel for me."¹⁰⁶

And first it is clear that the witch did not recognize Saul here, since she praised him [i.e., the man who came to her whom she did not recognize as Saul] and [then] reproached him by saying: "Saul destroyed the witches, and you wish to kill me."¹⁰⁷ And if she did not recognize his face, how could she know his intention?

¹⁰³ GARDET 1948, p.108.

¹⁰⁴ FAHD 1966, p.40.

¹⁰⁵ GRIGOR TAT'EWAC'I 1993, p.428. Gregory of Nyssa wrote a short treatise on the witch of Endor, *Peri tēs Engastrimythou*, (PG 45, 107-114) which also contends that the witch did not conjure up Samuel but a demon. Tat'ewac'i, however, relies upon the biblical text more than Gregory; it is unlikely the latter was a direct source for the Armenian scholastic.

¹⁰⁶ 1Sam 28:11.

¹⁰⁷ 1Sam 28:9.

Երկրորդ՝ զի այն քան երկեալ ի ծառու վնդն այն, որ այլոց կեանս խոստանայր:

Երրորդ՝ զի զարհասն իւր ոչ գիտէր. ապա և ոչ զայլոցն կարէր գիտել. զի ասաց՝ կամիս զիս կորուսանել. որ ոչ կորեալ ի Սաւուղայ:

Չորրորդ՝ զի երդմամբն Սաւուղայ ապա Հաստատեցաւ:

Հիներորդ՝ զի որպէս զկանխագէտ ոչ ասաց Սաւուղայ թէ՛ զու ով՞ էս որ զիս փրկես ի Սաւուղայ:

Վեցերորդ՝ զի եւարց ի Սաւուղ թէ՛ զո՞ խնդրես. և թէ՛ զառաջիկայն գիտէր, զներկայ միտքն ընդեր՞ ոչ գիտաց:

Եւթներորդ՝ զի թէ՛ ճշմարտապէս Սամուէլ յառնէր, ոչ կամէր կինն. զի կորուսիչ էր նոցա. այլ գիտէր որ նմանութիւն էր Սամուէլի:

Ութերորդ՝ զի ճշեաց թէ՛ ընդէ՞ր խաբեցէր զիս, զու Սաւուղ էս: Արդ՝ թէ՛ զխաբէութիւնն ոչ ճանաչէր, զիա՞րդ զճշմարիտ խորհուրդն գիտէր:

Ապա յայտ է թէ՛ որպէս Սաւուղ խաբէր զկինն, նոյնպէս և կինն խաբէր զՍաւուղ նմանութեամբն Սամուէլի:

Իններորդ՝ զիա՞րդ զարհուրեցաւ կինն յետ երդմանն, և անկաւ յերեսս մինչ քաջալերեաց Սաւուղ և եւարց:

Տասներորդ՝ աստուածս տեսի ասէ, զի զՍաւուղ և զՍամուէլ ետես: Եւ թէ՛ նա

Second, since that witch was that afraid of death, how could she promise life to others?

Third, as she did not know her own fate, then she was not able to know the fate of others, since she, who was not destroyed by Saul, said: “you wish to destroy me.”¹⁰⁸

Fourth, since then she was assured by Saul’s oath.

Fifth, since as a diviner she did not say to Saul: “Who are you that you [will] save me from Saul?”

Sixth, since she asked Saul: “Whom do you seek?”¹⁰⁹ and if she knew the future, why did she not know his present thoughts?

Seventh, since if Samuel had truly been raised, the woman would not want [to do so], since he was their destroyer; but she knew that [the apparition] was a likeness of Samuel [and not Samuel himself].

Eighth, since she groaned: “Why did you deceive me? You are Saul.”¹¹⁰

Now, it is clear that she could not recognize his deception, how could she have known his intention?

Then it is clear that as Saul deceived the woman, similarly that woman deceived Saul with a likeness of Samuel.

Ninth why was the woman terrified after his oath and fall on her face until Saul encouraged [her] and asked?¹¹¹

Tenth, she said “I saw gods,” since she saw Saul and Samuel. And if she

¹⁰⁸ 1Sam 28:9.

¹⁰⁹ 1Sam 28:11.

¹¹⁰ 1Sam 28:12.

¹¹¹ This does not happen in the Biblical account. It is Saul who is afraid and falls on his face. The witch is afraid after she sees Samuel approaching and realizes that it is Saul standing there. Saul then asks her what she sees, 1Sam 28:12-13.

յարուցանէր, ընդէ՞ր երկու եւան. զի նա միայն զՍամուէլ խնդրէր:

Մետասաներորդ՝ ընդէ՞ր ոչ ծանեալ թէ Սամուէլ է. զի ասաց՝ տեսանեմ այր ալեոր, և կրկնոց զիւրեւ: Զի թէ ինքն ձեացոյց մարմին և շունչ և յարոյց զնա, զիա՞րդ ոչ ճանաչէր:

Երկոտասաներորդ՝ ընդէ՞ր յետոյ ստեաց և կինն զտեսիլն զի եզեն զորթն իւր զզիւնցիկ: Զի թէ գիտէր զստոյգ մաշն Սաւուղայ ոչ կաշառէր զնա:

Ապա ուրեմն յայտ է սոքաւք երկոտասան գլխով թէ վճուկն ոչ գիտէր զառաջիկայն:

raised [them] why did she bring up two [people], since he asked for Samuel only?¹¹²

Eleventh, why did she not know that it was Samuel, since she said “I see an old man with a cloak around him”?¹¹³ Since if she herself caused a body and breath to take form and raised him, why did she not recognize him?

Twelfth, why, after the woman received the vision, did she slaughter her suckling calf¹¹⁴? For if she had known [about] the certain death of Saul, she would not have bribed him. Thus it is clear through these twelve points that the witch did not know the future.

Ališan cites another Armenian author who uses the example of the witch of Endor to define *վճուկ*: “The witch [is] he who pulls out the dead from chasms, as the female witch, who was a demon, [did] for Saul” (*վճուկն որ յանդնոց մեռեալս Հանէ, որպէս առ Սաւուղ կինն վճուկ, որ էր զև*)¹¹⁵. Ališan does not record the origin of the quote; it is thereby uncertain whether the quotation comes from a disciple of Tat'ewac'i's, or was one of his sources.

[VI]:

a. “And the necromancer [is] he who sleeps in a tomb and an important man takes form; as the mantic woman caused Samuel to appear to Saul”¹¹⁶ (*Եւ նշանագէտ, որ ի գերեզմանս ննջէ և նշանաւոր մարդ կերպարանէ. որպէս զՍամուէլ Սաւուղայ երևցոյց Հարցուկ կինն*).

As already noted, *նշանագէտ* (lit. ‘knower of signs,’ but here ‘necromancer’ is more appropriate) is rare in Armenian. It occurs in Dt. 18:11 (transl. Gr. *teratoskopos*) and, according to the NBHL, in Vardan Arewelc'i's unpublished commentary on Deuteronomy¹¹⁷. Tat'ewac'i's

¹¹² 1Sam 28:13. The Hebrew, Greek, and Armenian Bible do read ‘gods’, but it is clear from the context that only one being is meant.

¹¹³ 1Sam 28:14.

¹¹⁴ 1Sam 28:24, though there is no reference to a bribe.

¹¹⁵ ALIŠAN 1910, p.400.

¹¹⁶ 1Sam 28.

¹¹⁷ NBHL s.v.; THOMSON 1992a, p.311, n. 68.

interpretation of *նշանագէտ* as necromancer is based upon Dt. 18:10-11: “There shall not be found among you one who passes his son or his daughter through fire, or performs divinations, or casts spells, or may be an augur, or performs sorcery, or may be a witch, or a ‘knower of signs’ for questioning the dead.”¹¹⁸

Tat’ewac’i’s use of the witch of Endor as an example of *նշանագէտ* attests to the rarity of the term in Armenian. As was noted above, he latter labels her a *վհուկ*, ‘witch’, a more fitting description. Grigor alludes to her here to enforce the notion that the *նշանագէտ*—like sorcerers and witches—only deceive through *irrealia*.

[VII]:

a. “And the dream interpreter [is] he who in the night sees demons and tells prophecy in order to deceive” (*Եւ երազաՀանն, որ ի գիշերի տեսանէ զդեւ և ճարգարէութիւն պատմէ զի պատրեսցէ*).

According to the *Counsel Concerning Solitaries* (*Խրատ Յաղագս Միանձանց*) attributed to Elišē (5th c.), though most probably written later, prophesizing through dreams was considered a mark of holiness. The author holds up to his fellow brethren the ideal of monks who slept very little but who “see spiritual dreams and interpret these dreams as the words of the holy prophets” (*երազ Հոգեկան տեսանեն, և անդէն զանուրջսն մեկնեն իբր զբանս սուրբ ճարգարէիցն*)¹¹⁹.

The seventh-century Armenian scholar, Anania Širakac’i, provides an example of a more negative reaction to independent dream interpretation. In part three of his *Cosmology* (*Տիեզերագիտութիւն*)¹²⁰, he recounts how he desired to know whether people lived on the other side of the earth. While praying in the martyrrium of St. Eugenios, he fell asleep and had a vision. In this vision it was proven to him that there are no living creatures on the other side of the earth. However, when he related his dream to his teacher, Tykhikos, the latter became very disturbed at Anania’s experience. Russell notes that Anania does not include this vision in his short autobiography, “perhaps out of caution,” and that Armenian legend relates that he was sent into exile for his occult learning¹²¹.

¹¹⁸ Մի գտանիցի ի քեզ որ ածիցէ զուստր իւր կամ զզուստր իւր զբոցով. և զիւթիցէ զիւթութիւն, և Հմայիցէ, և ՀաւաՀարց լինիցի [11] և կախարդիցէ կախարդանօք, և վհուկ, և նշանագէտ լինիցի առ ի զմեռեալսն Հարցնելոյ.

¹¹⁹ ELIŠĒ 1950, p.410.

¹²⁰ On this text and its relation to other Late Antique and Iranian visions, see RUSSELL 1988-89.

¹²¹ RUSSELL, 1988-89, p.167, 159.

As noted above, Vardan Aygekc'i cautions against deceptive dreams that are the instruments of demons and attack people who go to sorcerers. He comments that lay people who have recourse to sorcery "are deniers of God and confessors of demons; on account of which, demons deceive them with dreams and cause them to rejoice or terrify them."¹²²

One might also compare the *երազատեսներ* ('dream seers') of Lori who performed a related act at the beginning of the twentieth century. At a client's request, the *երազատես* falls asleep and interprets whatever dream appears in order to answer the client's query¹²³.

Tat'ewac'i previously addressed the nature of dreams in the *Book of Questions* (vol. V, sect. 27), in which the influence of Evagrius of Pontus and Gregory of Nyssa is evident¹²⁴. While he mentions the former, Grigor does not cite him directly; the reference is to chapters 54-56 of Evagrius' *Praktikos*¹²⁵. Tat'ewac'i quotes Gregory of Nyssa at greater length, summarizing from chapter thirteen of his *De Hominis Opificio*:

Ինչդրեմ ուսանիլ թէ զի՞նչ է երազն որ տեսանէ մարդ:

Պատասխանի: Զանազան են դէժք երազոց: Զի է որ բնական է, և է որ աստուածային, և որ դիւական:

Այն որ աստուածայինն է տեսիլ կոչի. որպէս Աբրահամուն. Յակոբայն. Յովսեփայն. և Դանիէլին: Որ ի խորհրդական միտսն վասն աւգտի զլինելոցն ցուցանէր:

Իսկ դիւականն ընդդէմ այսմ՝ վասն մոլորութեան զանազան երևմունս ցուցանէ աղտեղութեան.

և կամ զբարին խափանել ջանայ. որպէս ի չարչարանս տեսոն վասն կնոջն Պիլատոսի ընթերցեալ լինի. և որպէս զրէ սուրբն Եւագրիոս:

I ask to learn what is the 'dream' which a man sees?

A.: There are various types of dreams. For there is that which is natural, and that which is divine, and that which is demonic.

That which is divine is called a 'vision', like those of Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, and Daniel. It demonstrated the future for [their] aid in symbolic thoughts.

But the demonic is against this; it shows various apparitions of foulness on account of error.

And it labors to obstruct the good, as may be read in the passion of the Lord on account of Pilate's wife¹²⁶, and as the holy Evagrius writes.

¹²² ուրացողք են Աստուծոյ և խոստովանողք դիւաց. վասն որոյ երազովք խաբեն զնոսս զէքն և ուրախացուցանեն և կամ զարհուրեցուցանեն, VARDAN AYGEKC'I 1956, p.59.

¹²³ LALAYEAN 1903, p.235. This custom may be analogous to the Greek practice of *psychomanteia* ('soul oracles') in which the client falls asleep in a temple and waits for a vision, see LUCK 1985, p.209-211; cf. also RUSSELL 1992.

¹²⁴ GRIGOR TAT'EWAC'I 1993, p.268.

¹²⁵ EVAGRIUS 1971, p.624-633; SARGISEAN 1907, p.41-42.

¹²⁶ Matth. 27:19.

Իսկ բնական երազն բաժանի ի չորս
ըստ սրբոյն նիւսացւոյ ի գիրս կազ-
մութեան:

Նախ՝ զի մնացորդք գործոց և խորհ-
րոց կերպարանին ի յիշատակարանս
Հոգւոյն զոր ինչ գործեաց ի անցե-
լումն, կամ խորհեցաւ վասն Հան-
դերձելոյն:

Երկրորդ՝ զոր ատորժական ունի զկա-
րաւորութիւն զայն տեսանէ. որպէս քա-
ղցեալն զկերակուր. և ծարաւն զջուր:

Երրորդ՝ ըստ Հիւթին յաւելուածոյ և
պակասութեան մաղձիցն՝ ի ներքուստ
կամ յարտաքուստ, ջերմ և ցուրտ և
այլն, զնորին նմանն և զկերպարանն
առնու առ ինքն:

Չորրորդ՝ ըստ բարուցն տեսանէ ոք. զի
այլ է երազ արի մարդոյ, և այլ երկ-
չոտին. այլ գիճասիրին, և այլ պար-
կեշտին:

Նմանապէս խոհեմին և անզգամին.
տրասիրին, և անյազ անիրաւին:

But the natural dream is divided into
four according to the Holy Nyssan in
his *De Hominis Opificio*.

First: remainders of works and
thoughts take form in the memories of
the soul which it did in the past¹²⁷ or
thought concerning the future¹²⁸.

Second, one sees that desire [for]
which one has an appetite; as [when]
one is hungry, [he sees] food; and
[when] thirsty, water¹²⁹.

Third, according to a surplus of humor
and a deficiency of biles, internally or
externally, heat and cold, etc., he
receives that which is like it and its
form to himself¹³⁰.

Fourth, one sees according to his
inclinations, since a brave man's
dream is different from a coward's;
the licentious man's [is] different
from the chaste man's.

Likewise for one who is prudent and
for the foolish; for the generous and
for the greedy iniquitous one¹³¹.

¹²⁷ Cf. Gregory: "some shadows and echoes of those things which happen in our waking moments—of the operations both of sense and of intellect—which are impressed upon it by that part of the soul which is capable of memory, that these, I say, are pictured as chance will have it, as some echo of memory still lingering in this division of the soul," GREGORY 1994, p.401 [PG 44 col. 168D].

¹²⁸ Cf. Gregory: "memory is confused, and foreknowledge, though rendered doubtful by uncertain veils, is imaged in shadows of our waking pursuits, and often indicates to us something of what is going to happen," GREGORY 1994, p.401 [PG 44 col. 169D].

¹²⁹ Cf. GREGORY: "the constitution of dreams is framed with regard to such and such a condition of the body: for thus the thirsty man seems to be among springs, the man who is need of food to be at a feast, and the young man in the heat of youthful vigour is beset by fancies corresponding to his passion," GREGORY 1994, p.402 [PG 44 col. 172D].

¹³⁰ Cf. Gregory: "according to the differences of complaints the visions of dreams appear differently to the patients: that the visions of those of weak stomachs are of one kind, those of persons in fevers of yet another; that those of patients suffering from phlegmatic affections are diverse, and those again of plethoric patients, and of patients in wasting disease, are different," GREGORY 1994, p.402 [PG 44 col. 173B].

¹³¹ Cf. Gregory: "Moreover, most men's dreams are conformed to the state of their character: the brave man's fancies are of one kind, the coward's of another; the wanton man's dreams of one kind, the continent man's of another; the liberal man and the avaricious man are subject to different fancies," GREGORY 1994, p.402 [PG 44 col. 173B-C].

Իսկ զի բանական միտքն ոչ տեսանէ զերազն, այլ անբան մասն, որ է տնկականն ի մեզ. նա յածի յերազն. և ցուցանի այս ի կրկին իրաց:

Նախ՝ զի խորհրդական միտքն կարգաւոր և առանց տարակուսանաց տեսանէ.

Իսկ երազն անկարգ և տարակուսանաւք և զանհնարն տեսանէ որպէս ի վերայ աւոյ թռչիլ, և ի ծովու զնալն, և աղքատաց տագաւորել, և այլն:

Երկրորդ՝ զի բանական միտքն և զգայականն խափանեալ է ի գործոյ յորժամ ննջէ ոք:

Իսկ տնկականն միայն գործէ ի կերակրիլն և աճիլն, նա նկարէ յինքեան ի զգայութեանցն և ի մտացն ըստ տկարութեան իւրոյ անկարգաբար երեցուցեալ ի յիշատակարանս մտացն որպէս ասացաք:

Այս քան վասն երազոյ:

But since the rational mind does not see dreams, but only the irrational part [of man]—which is vegetative in us—wanders in a reverie; and this is demonstrated through two things.

First, because the thoughtful [part of the] mind sees in an orderly fashion and without doubts.

But dreams [are] unordered and [filled] with doubts and one sees impossibilities such as flying in the air and walking on a sea, and the poor reigning, etc.¹³².

Second, since rational thoughts and feelings are obstructed from work when one sleeps.

And the vegetative alone works in eating and growing [and] it depicts in itself [things] from the sensations and thoughts according to its own weakness and makes [them] appear unordered in the memories of the mind as we said¹³³.

So much concerning dreams.

¹³² Cf. Gregory: "We for our part say that it is only the conscious and sound action of the intellect which we ought to refer to mind; and as to the fantastic nonsense which occurs to us in sleep, we suppose that some appearances of the operation of the mind are accidentally moulded in the less rational part of the soul; for the soul, being by sleep disassociated from the senses, is also of necessity outside the range of the operations of the mind; for it is through the senses that the union of mind with man takes place; therefore when the senses are at rest, the intellect also must needs be inactive; and an evidence of this is the fact that the dreamer often seems to be in absurd and impossible situations, which would not happen if the soul were then guided by reason and intellect.... With these [dreams], then, man is beguiled, not least to acquaintance with the things that present themselves by any train of thought, but wandering among confused and inconsequent delusions," GREGORY 1994, p.400-401 [PG 44 col. 168B-D].

¹³³ Cf. Gregory: "It seems to me, however, that when the soul is at rest so far as concerns its more excellent faculties (so far, I mean, as concerns the mind and sense), the nutritive part of it alone is operative during sleep, and that some shadows and echoes of those things which happen in our waking moments—of the operations both of sense and of intellect—which are impressed upon it by that part of the soul which is capable of memory, that these, I say, are pictured as chance will have it, as some echo of memory still lingering in this division of the soul.... [B]ut while the nutritive faculty is then busied with digestion during sleep, and keeps all our nature occupied with itself, the faculty of sense is neither entirely severed from it (for that cannot be separated which has once been naturally joined), nor yet can its activity revive, as it is hindered by the inaction during sleep of the organs of sense.... For this cause memory is confused," GREGORY 1994, p.401 [PG 44 col. 168D-169B,D].

[VIII-X]:

“Why does God allow such signs to exist? For two reasons. First, so that the steadfast in faith and the weak may be tested and distinguished from each other. Second, so that they who deal in and believe such things may be punished, as in Deuteronomy He commands to kill such people. But the steadfast in faith will receive recompenses for their faith” (*Վասն էր՝ թող տայ աստուած լինիլ այսոցիկ նշանաց: Վասն երկու պատճառի: Նախ՝ զի փորձեսցին և ընտրեսցին ի միմեանց Հաստատունքն ի Հաւատս և տկարքն: Երկրորդ զի գործունեայք և Հաւանաւղքն այնպիսեացն պատժեսցին. որպէս ի յերկրորդ արէնքն Հրամայէ սպանանել այնպիսին. իսկ Հաստատունքն ի Հաւատս՝ վարձս առցեն ի Հաւատոց իւրեանց).*

The biblical reference is most likely to Dt. 13: 9 and 18:20 in which false prophets and diviners are condemned to death. Tat'ewac'i wishes to stress that any form of sorcery is equivalent to apostasy and to the actions of false prophets who deny the supreme power of God.

Mayragomec'i likewise stresses the point that God permits such deceptions to exist so that they who believe in them may be punished. God, he claims, “allows the destruction of your works by your charms; for you would believe falseness and will be greatly punished, instead of having accepted the truth.”¹³⁴

[XI-XII]:

a. “And a clear sign of the former's error is this: The performers of such things are ignoble in deed and mad and they give men to the demons by force. Accordingly, Paul said: ‘When you were heathens, how you were lead away and used to come to the speechless idols.’¹³⁵ He did not say ‘to go’, which is willful, but ‘to be led away’ which is to be drawn involuntarily. And concerning sorcerers it is written above in chapter 20, section 27” (*Եւ յայտնի նշան մոլորութեան նոցա այս է, զի այնպիսեաց կատարաւղք վատթարք են գործովք և մոլի. և առ զկես տանին զմարդիկք բռնութեամբ. ըստ այնմ որ ասէ Պաւլոս, մինչ Հեթանոսքն էիք՝ առ կուռս անմոռնչս որպէս երթայիք և գայիք: Ոչ ասէ գնալ որ կամաւորն է. այլ երթալ, որ ակամայ քարշիլն է: Եւ վասն կախարդաց գրեալ է ի վերոյ իի գլուխն իէ Համարն).*

¹³⁴ թող տայ և աստուած ապականել գործոց քոց ըստ Հմայիցն քոց, զի ստութեանն Հաւատացես և մեծապէս դատապարտիցիս, փոխանակ զի զհնարաւորութիւնն ոչ ընկալար, YOVHANNES MAYRAGOMEC'I 1860, p.200-201. Similar condemnations are made on p.195-196 and 201-202.

¹³⁵ 1Cor 12:2.

Tat'ewac'i here adapts John Chrysostom's gloss on Gr. ἀπαγόμενοι ('lead away') in his twenty-ninth homily on Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians (1Cor. 12:2). Chrysostom interprets Paul to mean that in the temples of the idols, "if anyone was ever possessed by an unclean spirit, and divined, as though led away, he was dragged bound by the spirit, knowing nothing of that which he was saying. For this is distinctive to the diviner, to be deranged, to submit to force, to be pushed, to be drawn, to be dragged as a madman."¹³⁶ The gloss is more effective in Greek than it is in Armenian for two reasons. First, Gr. ἀπάγω can also mean 'to arrest,' 'to lead away to prison,'—Chrysostom is taking advantage of this shade of meaning—while Arm. *երթաժ* by itself does not possess such connotations. Second, the verse in Greek uses forms of ἄγω for both verbs (ἤγεσθε, ἀπαγόμενοι)¹³⁷ while in Arm. two different verbs are used (*երթայիք, գալիք*). Arm. *գալ*, 'to come,'¹³⁸ more accurately translates Gr. ἤκω than ἄγω. Its use here weakens Tat'ewac'i's gloss of *երթալ* as 'to force to go' as it implies they came willingly. However, we may note that *երթալ*, instead of *գնալ* ('to go'), is the verb usually used to describe the action of going to a sorcerer. Canon 9 of the Council of Šahapiwan speaks of "they who go to oracles and diviners" (*որք ի Հարցուկս Երթան կամ ի զիւթել*); likewise, Yovhannēs Mayragomec'i¹³⁹, Vardan Aygekc'i¹⁴⁰, and Dawit' Ganjakec'i¹⁴¹ use *երթալ* and not *գնալ* in reference to going to sorcerers¹⁴².

Conclusion

Of the nineteen magical practices explicitly mentioned by Tat'ewac'i, the following eight find corroboration for their practice in Armenia by both earlier Armenian literary sources and later ethnographic studies:

¹³⁶ εἶποτε κατασχέθη τις ὑπὸ πνεύματος ἀκαθάρτου καὶ ἐμαντεύτο, ὥσπερ ἀπαγόμενος, οὗτος εἴλκετο ὑπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος δεδμένους, οὐδὲν εἰδὼς ὃν λέγει. Τοῦτο γὰρ μάντεως ἴδιον, τὸ ἐξεστηκέναι, τὸ ἀνάγκην ὑπομένειν, τὸ ὠθεῖσθαι, τὸ ἔλκεσθαι, τὸ σύρεσθαι ὥσπερ μαινόμενον, PG 61 col. 241.

¹³⁷ 1Cor 12:2: Οἶδατε ὅτι ὅτε ἔθνη ἦτε, πρὸς τὰ εἰδῶλα τὰ ἄφωνα, ὡς ἂν ἤγεσθε, ἀπαγόμενοι.

¹³⁸ *գալիք*=2nd. pers. pl. impf. of *գալ*, 'to come.'

¹³⁹ YOVHANNĒS MAYRAGOMEC'I 1860, p.191, 195, 196, and 204.

¹⁴⁰ VARDAN AYGEKC'I 1956, p.58.

¹⁴¹ DAWIT' GANJAKEC'I 1961, p.82.

¹⁴² Tat'ewac'i does use *գնալ* in his passage on witches. He comments that Saul went (*գնաց*) to the witch of Endor. The biblical verse (1Kg [=1Sam] 28:8), however, also uses that form of the verb in the same context and most probably influenced the monastic's choice of words.

(1)barley divination¹⁴³, (2)water divination; (3)prognostication by means of birds, (4)prognostication by the sound of fire; the use of (5)rope, (6)wax, and (7)iron in the creation of charms¹⁴⁴; (8)dream interpretation. There is a great likelihood that these forms of magic had been performed well before and during Tat'ewac'i's life and continued to be performed in the modern period.

Six of the nineteen practices listed only occur in literary sources: (1)flour divination; the use of a (2)weasel and a (3)comb for prognostication; (4)the employment of a buried vessel by sorcerers; (5)the ascription of the title *hazimat* to witches who call people up from the dead, and (6)necromancer (*հշահադէտ*). Of these, prognostication by means of a weasel is unlikely to have been performed in Armenia; there is neither Armenian literary evidence nor ethnographic evidence to substantiate its existence. As Ps.-Nonnos' *scholia* to Gregory Nazianzenus' *Orationes* includes this information, Tat'ewac'i most likely learned of it from there¹⁴⁵.

The use of a comb in auguries is also difficult to establish. Its only reference is in Dawit' Ganjakec'i where it is linked with the more widely attested striking of the anvils by blacksmiths on New Year's day. This custom, however, is not associated with auguring in other sources, although it is interesting that the practice may have spread to other crafts. It is likely that Tat'ewac'i included the comb as an instrument of augurs because of Ganjakec'i's discussion.

The necromancer (*հշահադէտ*), too, was not a contemporary phenomenon in Armenia. The noted rarity of the term and the difficulty both Vardan Arewelc'i and Tat'ewac'i have in defining it suggest that the latter's reason for including it was its appearance in Dt. 18:11.

Flour divination and the burying of a vessel in acts of sorcery were practices with which Tat'ewac'i was likely familiar. Although Grigor could have learned of flour divination from Esayi Nč'ec'i's *Commentary on the Psalms*, flour divination does not differ greatly from the more popular barley divination and sand divination for which there is ethno-

¹⁴³ As noted, the popularity of barley divination was also substantiated by the Latin missionary, Simon of Saint-Quentin.

¹⁴⁴ In the ritual of the wax melter described by Lalayean, thread, wax, and sometimes a nail were employed. A ritual separate from wax melting in New Julfa for curing someone haunted by a dead person also requires the use of thread and a nail, ABGAREAN 1964, p. 407-408.

¹⁴⁵ The *Orationes* formed part of the curriculum of medieval Armenian universities and were thus well known and studied, see LA PORTA 2001, p.113; on the *Orationes* in Armenian generally, see LAFONTAINE-COULIE 1983.

graphic evidence. Again, it is possible that Tat'ewac'i relied upon Vanakan Vardapet for his knowledge of the use of buried vessel, but as the practice is attested in the region¹⁴⁶, it is not unlikely that it was performed in Armenia in the fourteenth century.

Tat'ewac'i comments that 'they' call the conjuring of demons *hazi-mat'*. Who exactly the 'they' are is unclear. It may refer to local Armenians or to Arabs or Persians. Nonetheless, Grigor's citation of the Arabic word is an important witness to the cognizance of Arabic magical arts in Armenia at the very least among the learned and quite possibly among Armenians more generally.

I have been able to find only ethnographic verification for four of the practices noted by Tat'ewac'i: (1)sand divination and (2)stone divination; the prognosticatory use of (3)doors, (4)and slippers. It is likely that all of these were practiced in fourteenth-century Armenia. The only questionable practice is that of slippers. According to the Armenians of Detroit, slippers possess an apotropaic function against a bad omen, but they do not foretell anything in and of themselves. Although Tat'ewac'i may be referring to a custom similar to this, it is impossible to determine with any certainty.

The one practice for which I have not been able to find any Armenian literary or ethonographic evidence is the employment of a beam in auguries. The apotropaic use of beams has been witnessed in Syria, and I have noted the Armenian custom of protecting doors and smoke-holes. There is no indication that beams were used to foretell the future, although it is not impossible that they did. As in the case of the slippers, Tat'ewac'i may have preserved for us a previously unattested custom.

Tat'ewac'i's response to why God permits such activities mirrors Yovhannēs Mayragomec'i's argumentation; while he further attempts to employ, albeit unsuccessfully, John Chrysostom's philological method of interpretation in his analysis of the verbs *q̇uwl* and *tṗθwl*. The other passages cited from the *Book of Questions* display a similar degree of erudition. Grigor's discussion of the battle between Moses and the Egyptian sorcerers shows a reliance upon Vahram Rabuni's *Questions and Answers on Genesis*, which may in turn have been dependent on the *Canon of Grigor Part'ew*. The citations from Tat'ewac'i's polemic against Islam suggest that the Armenian monk was somewhat versed in Qur'anic traditions. His exposition on dreams evidences his familiarity with Evargius of Pontus' *Praktikos* and Gregory of Nyssa's *De Opificio Hominis*.

¹⁴⁶ See, for example, NAVEH-SHAKED 1987, p. 15-16.

The “Question concerning Diviners” is an important witness to magical customs performed in fourteenth-century Armenia. The correlation between the practices described by Armenian ethnographers with those noted by Tat’ewac’i and earlier sources suggests that many of the magical arts portrayed could be found among the customs of the contemporary local population. The ethnographic material also clearly indicates that, despite Grigor’s efforts, these magical practices survived well after their calumniator’s demise.

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